

number one

\$1.00

Thriller



THRILLER

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Special Credit and Acknowledgments: to Joanne M. Weddle, for being business manager and making it all possible, to Ronald V. Burt for the lending of his skills, to Jim Carrison and Bill Malcom for their co-operation, to Randy Jensen and Bob Jensen for their encouragement, to Gary D. Goret for the info, and to anyone else I may have forgotten.

This issue is dedicated to ROBERT BLOCH, the man who has the heart of a small boy like me in a lar on his desk.

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Does anyone actually read these things, or is it just a office for the editor to mouth off dumb things like "welcome to the first issue of Thriller, a little late perhaps but I hope you'll find it worth the wait." It is time traditional for the editor to launch into a commentary discussing the sad state of the monster movies, explaining why the magazine is overdue, or ranking out on Hammer. Instead of going into all that stuff, I'd like to give my opinions on a few controversial subjects which may encourage you to continue reading this so far boring editorial.

When 1971 is behind us, I hope to look back on THE HOUSE THAT CRIPPLED BLOOD with the opinion that it is one of last year's finest films. Robert Bloch wrote it with his usual easy hand, just as he has been writing books, short stories, novels, screenplays and magazines for the past 15 years. Bloch is able to write with great wit and wisdom in all areas of such a tremendously broad genre, and this fact alone makes him one of the finest, most versatile authors around today. He has contributed more to the world of gothic literature and film than anyone else I can think of, and a good example of this is Psycho—it has seen countless reissues, and therefore, I think it only fitting that Thriller #1 be dedicated to Robert Bloch, the man who has the heart of a small boy like me in a lar on his desk.

And now, the opinions....
Richard Matheson's extraordinary science-fiction novel, I Am Legend, makes good material for a motion picture, although it is widely held fact that a film can never be as good as the book on which it is based. But on the other hand, the screen and the written word are two entirely different mediums, and should be thought of as such. What will look good in a book will not necessarily make for a substantial screenplay, unless there are

compromising alterations between the two. Changes in the film will disappoint readers of the book, and vice-versa, but often it is better to criticize a film for what it is, rather than what we would have it be. Such is the case with THE ONCE MAN, Boris Sava's much misinterpreted film, and I am feeling defensive about it. The film was a financial success as one of 1991's major releases, it was well received by the general public, it was given mixed to generally favorable reviews by the critics, and its success and fandom seems to hate it just because it isn't a carbon copy of the book. That is being shortsighted and ignorant. THE ONCE MAN is good science-fiction in my opinion, and faithful enough to the book.

There are two monsters at work at American International and Hammer, and they are trying to give horror films a bad name. These monsters are... Jordan Hessler and Anthony Hinds! Jordan Hessler first film for AIP was THE DEADLY SNAKE, a very sore, sullied, loose adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's short story. The script had potential, but Hessler did everything in his lack of power to ruin that and whatever other qualities the film could have had. His next one was, I think, SUGAN and SUGAN AGAIN, a very pretentious, incoherent, disjointed film. As producer and director, he ruined these two films just as he did with CRY OF THE SANNERS. Now we are confronted with MURDERS IN "HUX MURDERS", and if one thought that Hessler showed any promise in his earlier film, these thoughts are quickly dismissed upon viewing his latest effort. Hessler's film is a mess, it has flawed but well-written scripts, good production qualities and the acting abilities of an otherwise all-star, quite deniable cast. As a director, he follows the sit-down camera angles uncertainly, and I observe that his blocking of the actors is clumsily, almost ineptly handled. He has a technique or style, his camera movement, angles, shots, and positions are inappropriate and poorly chosen. He is unable to stress character or mood or emotion or understand the essentially important points of a story. Hessler may have a sense of direction, but not a director, but I doubt it, and his directorial abilities are less than nil. For example, in MURDERS IN "HUX MURDERS", Hessler provides us in the opening scene a view of the phantom-friend's hideously accented face, and we understand that whatever happens in the film to offer. Now everyone knows that the best way to establish suspense in a film such as this would be had by not showing the monster's face, but Hessler is just about the only director on the horror scene who understands that. Hessler does not do it, he paid to do—he's supposed to direct, but he doesn't. Instead of depending on his "talents," Hessler relies on blood, gore, sex, sadism, profanity and violence, and why in Hell AIP allows him to continue demolishing their most prestigious productions I'll never know!

AIP has Jordan Hessler and Hammer has John Elder, John Elder, under his real name of Anthony Hinds, was the greatest and most important film producer Hammer ever had under contract. He worked on some of the greatest films, HOUSE OF HORRORS, and THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN II-III, and he had written more scripts for

Hammer than anyone else, and all have been made into Hammer's worst productions. In evidence of his more recent screenplays I find it difficult to believe that this is the same "John Elder" who wrote Hammer's two excellent films, THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF and THE WASTING. Hinds also wrote under the name of Henry Younger in another film. I think, but certainly can't prove it, that Peter Deyan (he wrote THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD DRILL) and the PLUCK OF THE HORROR were both of these films under the name of John Elder and then Anthony Hinds took up the name. Why, I couldn't say, but Hinds's writing style and themes resemble that of Bryan's. Hinds will write a Frankenstein story book, and then turn it into a screenplay, and after a year or two he'll rewrite it into a "traculia story" and then make it a more desirable screenwriter has already written. Hinds's Frankenstein scripts (EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN and FRANKENSTEIN CREATED) have been downright silly, seemingly dated back to the old horror-trip-in-the-ice time of this of the 1930's-40's. His "traculia" scripts all hold up fairly well on their own—that is, as individual films—but looking at all of them one you'll realize that "TRACULIA"=WING OF DARKNESS, "TRACULIA" HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, "TRACULIA" HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, and "TRACULIA" HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD. It is basically the same old story reheated in a different way. Hinds is constantly at a loss as to what "traculia" should say and do, and the stories he writes in that "traculia"=monster-boy saves a girl. The problems of the hero and heroine are just like the problems of a young person experiencing today's world—the problems of a contemporary society into the 19th century setting. He often fails to be dramatic or funny, as in SOARS OF TRACULIA, in which a "traculia" and a "traculia" are across as being "unhappy" fully "traculia". It takes the technical crew, the director, and the "traculia" Francis, Roy Ward-Baker or Terence Fisher, to bring the film off convincingly. It is a good argument that many other people are now writing Hammer's films and that Hammer's production quality has decreased these passing years, everyone is aware of that, but the fact that the Hammer films were written by this man who calls himself John Elder, and while Hammer's qualities did decrease they have never been below average (with the one exception of THE HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN).

A Retrospective OF THE HORROR FILMS OF Terence Fisher

JAN VAN GENECHTEN



A word to the readership of *Thriller* concerning the following article and its author. It was written by a correspondent of mine by the name of Jan Van Genechten, a native of Belgium, and a serious student of the horror and science-fiction film. I am grateful to Jan for a number of film reviews he has allowed me to publish in *Photon* on films which may never see release in the United States, and a review by Jan on the controversial German vampire film, *JURATON*, will see publication in issue number 22 of that magazine. Another article by Jan, entitled "Made in Italy," will most probably appear in an upcoming issue of *Gore Graffiti*. The following work, with the exception of a few grammatical revisions and additional information, is exactly as I received it from Jan. I think it presents some views on Terence Fisher which we as American fans, may find both interesting and entertaining.

-Ronald V. Borst
It now appears that Terence has decided to permanently retire from a directing career which dates back to his first film (*COLONEL BOGHI*) in 1947, and a career in the cinema which began fourteen years earlier, as a film editor on the first Will Hay's comedies. *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* (1969), his last film, is only three years old, yet already Fisher's name may slowly be fading away into obscurity. Some forty years hence, our children's film will probably rediscover his work and admire it, much like we have rediscovered and admired the horror movies of the 1920's and '30's.

With a few exceptions, a great many horror film fans and an even greater number of film critics didn't like Fisher's work. He and his films have had many destructive reviews and dull criticism applied to them. In the United States, most fans rave about the old horror film stars. They idolize some actors and don't give a damn about the films they've played in. They aren't even aware of a new, modern tendency in the genre. Outside of the United States (again with a few exceptions) the entire genre is considered "fodder for illiterate, sex-blood-gore maniacs and adolescents." Film critics who take such views seem to know only one director in the horror genre: Terence Fisher. They use his name as a synonym for everything that is nasty, trashy and compares his films to every blood and gore trash they have to review.

I think Fisher is an under-rated director. He made some of the finest masterpieces in the modern genre; films which fascinate an unprejudiced audience always and forever.

Fisher made his first appearance in the genre with two minor science-fiction efforts, the first two of which were produced by Hammer: *THE FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE* (1952) and *SPACEMATS* (1953). Both films were unimportant cheapies, strongly influenced by the American fashion of the time.

In 1957, Hammer produced a remake of Mary Shelley's classic *Frankenstein*, adapted it to a modern audience, and with Terence Fisher hired as director. The screenplay by Jimmy Sangster broke with all the established horror film "laws." Sangster invented an entirely new style, casting all long-winded swellings and side-intrigues of Shelley's novel. With the basic principle of the original story, he wrote a dynamic script, full of action. This formula-making the story acceptable for a modern audience by using a realistic narrative style—would become the basis of the modern tendency in the genre.

Thanks to Fisher's skillful new method of directing and the quality of his Hammer team, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* became a successful film. In the poor time around 1957, it was especially refreshing to see such beautiful settings, a fine photography. Peter Cushing played the role of Baron Frankenstein very well; Christopher Lee gave him all in the difficult part of the monster, although most agree that he didn't equal Karloff's performance of 1931, the make-up and the script that gives the monster a less important role made this impossible. In Fisher's many Frankenstein sequels the part of the monster would become still less important.

After the commercial and popular success of *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* Fisher himself proposed in 1958 to remake *DRACULA*. This would become his greatest masterpiece, a film I feel which may be put on the list of the ten best horror films of all time. The honour of this success is primarily due to Fisher. Many critics assert that Fisher owes the quality of his first films not to his direction but to his co-operators. It's certainly true when they notice that his recent work is not up to the mark of his first, because he had a less genial team at his disposal. I also agree with the film critics who feel that Fisher isn't a film author. He's only the leader of a team. But no one can deny Fisher is as a film director, a craftsman who is master of his trade. His latest films didn't fall by his mistakes.

In *HORROR OF DRACULA* Fisher keeps everything under control, and that's already a great performance for a director. He always remains the master of the situation. Though Fisher is a modest man, and in interviews always to try to light his short-comings, he talked very enchanted about his *DRACULA*. He even calls it his best film in an interview with *Mid-Minut*. *Frankenstein* and better than Browning version, with the view that a modern audience doesn't like long explanations without action. But in doing so he didn't bring any damage to the sphere or to the Gothic elements of the original classic. Ronald V. Borst called Fisher's *DRACULA* "dynamic horror in a Gothic vein," in *Photon*, a description that says everything.

Every sequence in the entire film, examined apart from each other, is successful in its direction, but a few attract the attention for their exemplary construction. The climax of the first part of the film (when Dracula confines Harker to the castle's crypt) is quite impressive. In this scene Fisher proves he is a great director. Another splendid example of his skill is the acquaintance with Dracula. Fisher tells about this in his interview with *MEZ* and he calls it, together with Dracula's visits to Lucy, the most successful in his film. From the beginning of the picture the audience is waiting for the usual vampire: the traditional fangs, the bloody smear on his face, all the grotesques of the old school. Dracula portrays his appearance continuously (an important element in the construction of the suspense) but his presence in the castle is palpable all of the time. When he turns up at last on the stairs, as if he came out of nothingness, the shock in the theatre ceases. Dracula quickly descends the stairs and comes closer to the camera until he is almost in close-up. He isn't any longer the bizarre character of a fairy tale, but a handsome aristocrat. The modern audience immediately accepts this new Dracula, thanks mainly to Fisher's subtle approach in direc-

ction.

Fisher's co-operators are all masters in their profession. In the first instance, Fisher owes a great deal to Sangster's script. Jimmy Sangster is the best author Hammer has ever had under contract. In *HORROR OF DRACULA* he succeeds to condense Stoker's novel into eighty-odd minutes of film, and besides that, makes it acceptable for a modern audience without damaging the gothic elements of the original work. He also builds suspense which eventually culminates into two effective climaxes. To make the story more dynamic and believable, Sangster changed some details of the original novel (Harker finds the Dracula is unable to change himself, etc.). But these alterations are not detrimental to Stoker's spirit. Sangster follows the original work rather faithfully.

The music of James Bernard is very functional to the action of the story. It's one of the cleverest musical scores in a horror film. The technical finishing touch (lighting, editing, sound, etc.) is very polished. The art direction of Bernard Robinson is masterly done as well, the sets being pearls in the genre, especially the interior of Dracula's castle.

Jack Aher was responsible for the genial photography in *HORROR OF DRACULA*, and the film thanks its sphere to Aher. Philip Strick remarked in *Motion*, "I've always read Stoker's *Dracula* in the colors of Jack Aher." The photography is also very functional to the story. Like the story the camera is always in motion. An example for later *Dracula* films were the many frog-perspectives to make Christopher Lee still more an imposing character. The special effects by Sidney Pearson are unforgettable. The technical finishing touch (lighting, editing, sound, etc.) is very polished. The art direction of Bernard Robinson is masterly done as well, the sets being pearls in the genre, especially the interior of Dracula's castle.

The casting of *HORROR OF DRACULA* is perfect. The film owes much of its popular success to Christopher Lee, who eventually achieved worldwide fame as Dracula. He doesn't simply play the role of Stoker's character; he is Dracula. Though his physique differs from Stoker's conception, Lee's vampire more closely resembles the "real" Dracula than any other previous actor who essayed the role. He breathed new life into the character by being the creepy shadow-in-the-night of Rod Browning's *DRACULA*, not the physical monster of Murnau's *MOS-PELART*. Instead, Lee's Dracula is an athletic figure, hardly a monster in appearance, but a very melancholic character; a strong, virile man, a prey to unknown supernatural forces, but his reactions are still those of a human being in part. This intelligent interpretation of the role by Lee, quite in the spirit of Stoker's novel, has never been equaled since, not even by Lee himself.

Peter Cushing was very well as Doctor Van Helsing, and even Michael Gough is good as Arthur Holmwood. The female stars are similarly well cast. Fisher has stated that he has never worked so well together with actresses as he did in *HORROR OF DRACULA*. That is, all of these people's efforts. *HORROR OF DRACULA* became one of the finest horror movies in history and an example of the best of its kind in the genre.

The same year Fisher finished a sequel to his first great film, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Titled *THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, the film has a great deal in common with the first film. Since it was made in the same time, with the same technical crew for the most part, the picture closely resembled its predecessor. Some have even said it is the most intelligent of all the Hammer Frankenstein films.

In 1959, Fisher realized a little known exotic adventure film called *THE WIZARD OF BOMBAY*. The script by D.T. Goodman was based on true facts and Fisher tries to tell the

story of the Thuge in an objective, almost documentary style. Neither that nor the convincing settings could hide a craving for cheap blood and gore. I didn't like this film very much, mainly because of its story, and I think it's one of Fisher's minor works.

Fisher also directed a remake of Paramount's 1944 *Wile Acher* horror film, *THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET*. In 1959, *THE MAN WHO CHASED DRACULA* is an irrational story about a man who can live forever, but done in a most realistic way. Fisher suspended in the story and the setting for several life, because only a small side-intrigue. Acher's photography for this film wasn't as masterly as his work for Fisher's previous Hammer horrors, but in spite of this *THE MAN WHO CHASED DRACULA* became one of the finest modern thrillers, due to the strong construction of suspense. Jimmy Sangster's skillful screenplay, and Bernard Robinson's functional art direction.

After the success of the *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* films, it was inevitable that Hammer would revive the Mummy. Again the company gave the direction to Terence Fisher. *THE MUMMY* (1959) didn't come up to the same mark as *HORROR OF DRACULA*, but it's a memorable effort in the field nevertheless. Jimmy Sangster re-wrote the script based on the Universal character created by Fox Tyler in *THE MUMMY'S HAND*, and subsequently by Lon Chaney Jr. in *THE MUMMY'S TOMB*, *THE MUMMY'S GHOST* & *THE MUMMY'S CURSE* but with elements of his own coupled with ideas which had already been explored by Universal. Hammer spent a great deal of time and gave a great deal of attention in the construction of the settings, all under the direction of designer Bernard Robinson. Ancient Egypt was reconstructed in authentic hand writings, and many of the alterations in the director's masterly script are authentic as well. Both contributions help very much in the making of the film. Jack Acher's photography is again brilliant, especially in the flash-backs to Ancient Egypt and in the Mummy seeking revenge in sleeping London.

Already in the screen duo, Cushing and Lee, appeared again together in *THE MUMMY*. Lee stalks around as the monster, just like in the *FRANKENSTEIN* film, and he can show little of his talents; again he is hampered by make-up and script limitations. It's noticeable that the part of Frankenstein's Men and that the Mummy in the original Hammer films were not considered as important as they were in the Universal film. The remaining cast members of *THE MUMMY* are all well cast.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES was Fisher's last film released in 1959. Peter Brian delivered a script in Sangster's style with a great deal of exciting sequences and the characters of Sir Henry Baskerville, Cecilia Stapleton and Holmes and Watson as well as much more dynamic than in the work of Doyle. In the Sherlock Holmes films, Fisher again combined the talents of his preferred stars, Cushing in the part of Holmes and Lee in the part of Sir Henry. A few critics objected to the casting of Cushing, calling it "a scholastic example of miscasting," but later Cushing himself proved the contrary. In the BBC-TV serial *SHERLOCK HOLMES*, the same critic thought Lee was a better Holmes in Fisher's *THE VALLEY OF FEAR* (1963) which eventually saw release as *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE DEADLY NECKLACE* in the United States. Unfortunately, coupled with a strong technical crew and a terribly inappropriate musical score, the second Holmes film directed by Fisher fails to reach the quality in the Hammer film. It was simply a case of too many elements combining to defeat what ever Fisher attempted.

In 1960, Fisher directed *THE TWO FACES OF DR. JESTER* for Hammer. The film was released in the United States as *HOUSE OF FRIGHT* by AIP, and if its screenplay by Wolf Mankowitz had been as good as Fisher's direction, the film might have been regarded as his greatest work. Though the script is far from being "trash" it contains a few dramatic faults. The schizophrenic Jekyll-Hyde is elaborated on much too simply stress the



although this was certainly not their intention. The design was to stress the two "faces" of Dr. Jekyll, but both director and scripter failed in this purpose. The theme of Jekyll & Hyde, along with the Beauty and the Beast, and the vampire myth, is the most fascinating in the genre. But it is a very subtle theme and difficult to elaborate on subtly in cinematic language. Nevertheless, Fisher succeeded rather well in this design. Fortunately, he chose not to commit the grave psychological error by showing Hyde as a physical monster. A physical monster doesn't conform to the theme nor to the subtlety of the story. Hyde is physically a monster but physically he's a normal, even handsome man. In most myths the (such as Jekyll-Hyde) Evil hides in the beauty and attractiveness of the main character. Fisher is one of the few directors who has understood this and by understanding it he has made his film to be a great director who is equally the master of the subtle or morbid terror. I feel he is the only director who really captured the spirit of the original Stevenson masterpieces. Unfortunately, critics scoffed at the film and called it "cheap amusement for folksy audiences!" Once again, Jack Asher proves to be one of the greatest photographers (for classical horror film) of all time. The rest of the film's structure is typical of Hammer's "early quality and excellence."

THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKILL could have been the best modern horror film if it wasn't for the fact that it was. Thanks to Fisher's direction, the film is still a success which everybody can enjoy.

The same year Fisher directed a sequel to HORROR OF DRACULA, Count Dracula had been destroyed in the previous film. So Jimmy Sangster wrote a screenplay (together with Edward Percy and Paul Bryant) which brought back Van Helsing to once beat a victim of vampirism initiated by Dracula. Because of obvious commercial reasons, Hammer titled the film THE BRIDES OF DRACULA. The script isn't as forceful as the first "bride" since it contains a few weak points and incorrect logic. There is also considerably less action and far too much talking and explanation. In spite of this, THE BRIDES OF DRACULA is an important horror film and deserves much more attention than it has received from both critics and fans. The film is an extraordinary choice for the vampire role. He has an icy look and in the beginning this is incredible. But Fisher made his choice to again stress the point that the vampire is no monster but a normal man in the power of superior forces. The basic myth, the attractiveness of Evil, is displayed very well by his appearance. Peter Cushing as Van Helsing (as the vampire's mother) are each splendid in their roles, and the Jack Asher photography, coupled with the Bernard Robinson settings and Malcolm Williamson score make the film representative of Hammer's finest quality films.

In 1961, Fisher filmed the classical myth of the werewolf suggested by Guy de Maupassant's excellent novel, *The Werewolf of Paris*. The film was titled THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF and the script was the first of many Hammer's to come which would be written by John Elder. Since Jimmy Sangster had begun to spend more time in the office for other production companies (as well as novels), Hammer searched for another writer who they could count on to write the scripts for their classical monster films. Anthony Hinds, who had produced all of the early Hammer excursions in the gothic, took the place of John Elder and has since written more screenplays for Hammer than anyone else. Against Fisher's will, Elder transferred de Maupassant's story from France to Spain. Fisher thought the idea absurd and said it had a bad influence on the whole. He also stated that he wasn't completely satisfied with the film but that it contained some of the best scenes he ever directed.

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF was Hammer's first big color production to feature photography by someone

other than Jack Asher. Arthur Grant may be a better cameraman in terms of realism, yet seems incapable of creating the irrational sphere that's necessary for a classic horror film like Asher was continually able to do. Nevertheless, Grant's photography for this film is excellent, especially in the first reel and last reel.

Each of the successes for this film must be attributed to Oliver Reed. I think he's one of the best werewolves the screen has given us. With the help of his crew, Fisher again scaled the heights with THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF. It is, together with HORROR OF DRACULA, his finest job in any estimation.

One year later, Hammer spent close to a million dollars (or more) in their remake of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. The picture became the most expensive British horror film of all time, but that isn't saying that it's also the best. British horror film, in spite of its high budget, it's a typical example of Hammer's (and Fisher's as well) later average production. Sangster was gone at this time, and Elder handled the scripting chores. Arthur Grant had replaced Asher, and both Lee and Cushing were establishing their careers elsewhere. Herbert Ross, an otherwise good actor, was hardly well cast for the part role of "The Man of a Thousand Faces." THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA was doomed to be a failure, and is generally recognized as Hammer's first of a great many to follow.

With the new crew Fisher was unable to equal the success of his earlier work. He also attempted to reach as large an audience as possible for he was responsible and had to take care that this expensive gamble would defray its costs. He wanted to make a grand hubbub instead of merely a horror movie, a B-film. That's the principal weakness of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. According to Fisher himself, the weakness lies in the editing, but he doesn't deny his own mistakes and labels the film one of his biggest failures. In spite of this little prevailing review, the film is still one of the better horror films of the period with a great deal of suspense and a characteristic Fisher style direction.

In 1964, Terence Fisher realized another of-quickie titled THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING, and a horror comedy, THE HORROR OF IT ALL. The first, produced by Lippert, had a finest well-written script by Henry Cave, also acting and a strong construction of the film by Fisher. But he couldn't lift THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING above the level of mediocrity. THE HORROR OF IT ALL was also in mediocrity, though it too had some fine memorable moments of direction.

It was in the same year that Fisher directed what I consider to be his best masterpiece—THE GORDON. The only weak point in the film was the monster itself. I don't mean the character as defined in the script, nor the makeup of Prudence Hymen, but a mistake in the direction or more probable, a producer's mistake. What these people never seem to understand (or rather, never want to understand) is that real terror is caused by suggestion and not by throwing blood and gore all over the place. Real fear hides in the unknown (i.e. Lovecraft), like Jacques Tourneur proved in his classic, CURSE OF THE DEMON. Perhaps it's inevitable to show the monster in the film, but this showing always a disillusion. This only negative point was utilized by Fisher in the building of suspense.

He waits a long time before showing the actual creature. Excepting for this, the remainder of THE GORDON is excellent. The intriguing question of who the monster actually is helps to construct a never ceasing form of suspense. This is unusually rare in a classical monster film, for usually we already know the monster and the story in advance and there's no problem to solve. Fisher owes a great deal to the art direction of Bernard Robinson and the photography of Michael Reed, who provided beautiful colors and compositions. The script is similarly



excellent. Unlike many of the other Hamner's, the script was not penned by Sangster nor Elder, but by director John O'Hill. It stands as being worth more than all of the work of John Elder put together. Its strength lies in the strong composition of the story, the elaborating and psychological deepening of the characters and the approach of an original subject in a most original way. Still other qualities are the abundant supply of action and the polished style of the dialog throughout.

THE GORGON owes a great deal to its excellent cast. Cushing Lee and Barbara Shelley really beat everything to put things simply. Although I feel that Lee's performance is strikingly fine, I am satisfied with THE GORGON. In an interview with Lee, he said anything but praised the film. He asserted that the film could be seen a good picture if the producers hadn't ruined it. As an example, he mentions the makeup of the monster; a makeup he feels wouldn't terrify anyone. He also tells how the head of the Gorgon in the last sequence comes rolling down the stairs just like a football. Lee felt that what had achieved alot and that such a climax was quite a disappointment, with the special effects inferior to those evidenced in HORROR OF DRACULA. I agree Christopher Lee in that the special effects considerably small in value, sometimes even offensive, executed, and I also agree that producers have inferior tastes, but I don't think that these points are detrimental to the fact that THE GORGON is a masterpiece and one of Fisher's best films. In a film with such qualities like THE GORGON, I gladly overlook minor details such as these.

The sequel to HORROR OF DRACULA which we had all awaited since 1958 at last followed in 1965. DRACULA-PRINCE OF DARKNESS was planned to be produced as early as 1959 but, mainly because of Lee's refusal to play Count Dracula again, the project was postponed until 1965. Sangster's script for this film probably dates from 1959, for in 1965 he was still writing scripts for thrillers and other genres. In any case, his pseudonym on the screen was John Sameso.

It may sound absurd but DRACULA-PRINCE OF DARKNESS came off with a bang because of his appearance. In the second half of the film there is far too much talking and very few scenes of action. Dracula himself has become only a side-intrigue. In Hamner's recent Dracula films (not directed by Fisher) the Count would become even less important a character in the scene. Sameso's script is of remarkably less value, mainly because of the lack of action and the revealing out of some situations. There remains very little of Stoker's spirit and characters.

The film displays quickness and cheapness which harmed the artistic value on the whole. The period of DRACULA-PRINCE OF DARKNESS was the beginning of the end for Hamner. From 1965 on the value of Hamner's movies started to drop. The producer's became only businessmen and were no longer concerned with the genre as before, but probably the whole sale production was the real cause of their decadence. By these means arose a lack of taste which influenced the value of photography; settings, effects, costumes, etc. Without this help, Fisher could only raise the film above sordidity. The James Bernard music is a copy of his score for HORROR OF DRACULA, and it does not fit at all with the story.

The film had lost much of their richness and looked even cheap in comparison with the settings for the original film. The difference in special-effects between the end scene in HORROR OF DRACULA and that scene revealed in DRACULA-PRINCE OF DARKNESS is enormous. Fisher used this end scene of HORROR OF DRACULA as the pre-title lead in for PRINCE OF DARKNESS which featured a comparison of both. Michael Reed's photography for the equal is beautiful, often quite excellent, but he is unable to equal Fisher's work for the original. Christopher Lee excels himself in putting the same feelings in the

role as he did previously, but the script and even the direction by Fisher, makes Dracula a far less dynamic and important figure than he was in 1958. Most of the time he merely stands peering, or lurking in the shadows. The best moments in the film (his appearance at the top of the staircase for one) are not their best, mere recreations of situations. In HORROR OF DRACULA, Sameso also chose to make Dracula far too dependent on his servant Klove, and although it was explained several times that Dracula had no dialog because he came back a symbol of evil, and would have nothing to say is ridiculous. If it had been explained that the fourth would have developed some purposeful dialog I'm sure. But Lee could still not like the "real" Dracula with all of these hamperings, and more than proved it in the last scenes of the film.

Fisher filmed a science-fiction film called ISLAND OF TERROR in 1966. It is his nice piece which was the fourth with special effects by art director John St. John. Even so, the acting talent of Peter Cushing, but the script is both weak and banal like much of the modern monster films so prevalent in America. Fisher's direction was flat, shows little of his mastery over the camera.

The same year as ISLAND OF TERROR Fisher directed another Frankenstein sequel. We already had one to THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN in 1964 (Freddie Francis' THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN, which I incidently think is the best of the Hamner series). Fisher was entrusted with the fourth which has release under the title of FRANKENSTEIN CREEPED WOMAN. Although its script was rather cliché (being written by John Elder) it became one of Hamner's best due to the direction by Fisher.

Unfortunately, I've never been able to see NIGHT OF THE KID HEAT. Fisher's science fiction film of 1968 with Lee and Cushing (note: this film has recently been released in the U.S. in support of GIGILLIA'S REVENGE under the title of ISLAND OF THE SCREAMING DAMNED). It has yet to be released in the States.

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT (in the U.S., THE DEVIL'S BRIDE) of 1968 was in my opinion, the biggest disappointment in the last few years. I thought that with a script by Richard Matheson based on a novel by Dennis Wheatley, Christopher Lee in the major role, and that the film had to be a great success. It is far from that. Everything in the film seemed to go wrong and I believe that the result is a failure in Fisher's career.

Fisher directed the evil genius for the last time in FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED in 1969. John Elder was replaced by assistant director Bert Salt who wrote a script, and a story by himself and producer Anthony Nelson-Kaye. Hamner felt they needed a new formula, some new blood in the company for the times were changing and the audiences too. So they searched, and still are searching, for other directors, writers, and actors. But I prefer Elder's clichés far more than the hotch-potch of cheap far-fetched horror shocks delivered by the slandering duo, Salt and Nelson-Kaye. Fisher's good taste and subtly is completely smothered in their over-dose of blood and gore; the settings and art direction are dead-end. The photography is not as good as in the last few years. The job on DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE, but that again is little.

Since I regard the photography in that Dracula film to be quite terrible. By his skill, Fisher saved what could be salvaged. He built up strong suspense (the only positive thing about the picture) and he did it with the same feeling as the best. Yet the whole was such in unsatisfying. After seeing the film I wanted to scream "Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed" too. After seeing the film everyone becomes aware of one thing: not one of the screen-writers ever read Shelley's novel. Evidently, they had a mixed up conception confusing Baron Frankenstein with Jack the Ripper!

So we've finally reached Fisher's last effort in the genre, at least what now seems to be his last effort. He may always regret his retirement, although one must realize that he's almost sixty-eight years old. His greatest battle on his prolific career should end with two failures with release of THE DEVIL'S BRIDE and FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED. But let us never forget that some of his earlier work will forever remain on the list of the greatest horror films of all time. The films which should always be connected with the name of TERENCE FISHER.

Film

WANTED: pressbooks, stills, lobby cards, posters, cassette film recordings of the James Bond and Hamner films. Also need recordings of HOUSE OF WAX, THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS, TARGETS, MOOSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD, THE NIGHT WALKER, BREAKS, STRAIGHT JACK, THE PREDATOR, THE DEADLY BEES, PORTER GARDEN, THE SKULL, NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, THE WILLOW WIFE OF SHROULOCK HOLMES, etc. Record albums and any other film material in relation to fantasy films. Will buy, sell and trade. Write to: Jerry Weddle, 14 Impala Drive, Centereach, New York, 11720.



GONE

but not forgotten!

ROBERT
SLOCH

GUEST EDITORIAL

Those of you who are old enough to remember THE BISBE--the King James version, not John Huston's--may recall a quotation to the effect that, "the lost shall be found."

If so, sometime between now and Apocalypses, which should be coming up shortly after a pause for station identification, we may possibly have the privilege of seeing some of the "lost" films of fantasy, horror and suspense.

Up until several years ago it was widely believed and reported that there were no longer any existing prints of WHITE ZOMBIE, THE MAGICIAN, THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, or LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT. Happily, all of these films have turned up within the past two years in either private or public screenings here on the West Coast.

Having had the pleasure of viewing them in their initial releases, dampening my brow and my knickers in the process, I am delighted to know that today's youngsters may possibly enjoy a similar perceptory and diuvinic effect.

But what about the pictures which haven't, to my knowledge, surfaced as yet?

Having relished Paul Wegener in the title-role of THE MAGICIAN, I'd like to compare his performance with that of Gustav von Seyffertitz as THE WIZARD--a Fox film was apparently lost in the chaos, or was cremable. In the transition between silent pictures and sound, the existing stills showing George Kucharow as an ape-man (a real ape-man, that is, with a genuine gorilla's body and a human head/ears most provocative. And von Seyffertitz was a vastly-neglected villain, so anyone who ever saw him in SPANROCK can attest.

Another film involving an ape-man is A BLIND BARGAIN, in which Lon Chaney played a dual role. As a Chaney fan I'm intrigued by many things about this picture: that it was directed by Wallace Worrell, who worked with Chaney on THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, that Chaney plays both a mad scientist and one of the scientist's victims; that one of the sequences in this 1922 release was in color. Add to this fact that the sinister scientist is named "Dr. Lamb" and the victim is listed as "A Hunchback" and you'll perhaps understand why I hope this film will be found.

Another Chaney film of the same period, WHILE PARIS SLEEPS, is similarly to be sought after. Directed by Maurice Tourneur, father of Jacques, and a notable fantasy-film maker in his own right, it reportedly anticipates Atwell by casting Chaney as the crazed keeper of a wax museum. Although released in 1923, it was actually made several years earlier; somewhere along the line it vanished.

Contemporary European fantasy and horror films fared better today we're still able to view THE Golem, THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI, MOSESSEN, DESTINY, and even Paul Leni's WAXWORKS. But I've no evidence of the present existence of THE STUDENT OF PRAGUE in its early version with Wegener playing the title-role, or the second filming starring Conrad Veidt. The same holds true for JANUSKOPF the German variant of DR. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, directed by Murnau. If memory serves, its cast features Veidt and Bela Lugosi, among others. Perhaps European film archives still hold these treasures.

But where is one to find a print of John Barrymore's SHERLOCK HOLMES, with the aforementioned Gustav von Seyffertitz as that lovable academician, Professor Moriarty--and an early twenties cast including Roland Young, Reginald Denry, Louis Wolheim, Hedda Hopper and--can it be!--William B. Powell?

Moving right along, a close friend of mine extols the early virtues of 1928's THE LEOPARD LADY, with its killer ape, and the 1932 tangle, SECRETS OF THE FRENCH POLICE. And while most fright-film freaks are well-acquainted with Leslie Banks' performance in THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME, how many have seen his in I AM SUSANNE in which--again, reportedly--he played the mad puppeteer?

Who, in the last forty years, has seen the "First All Tal-

king Mystery," as Warner Brothers billed THE TERROR--and lived up to the claim to the extent of having Conrad Nagel appear to *perish* the credits? What happened to Peter Lorre's early German film, made shortly after M, at least one of which was supposedly a horror picture about a multiple-murderer?

There are others, many others, some of which I've seen and some of which I'd dearly love to look at if indeed they still, by some miracle, exist.

But time flees and nitrate crumbles and even memory has its own mortality.

Do these uncanny efforts still reside in cans? Will we ever see and appreciate them again? What Price glory, or, for that matter, what Price, Vicent?

These are questions every lover of fantasy films would like answered.

--Robert Sloch

inside THRILLER!

or
YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING
WHY I'M HERE!

GREG
BAXX

As you might of guessed, this is the page, or page, for contributions from our readers!

Being that this is the first issue, this is rather difficult, but hereafter we don't hesitate to pick up a pen and paper and send me an epic worthy of publication. Now, advice to the love-lorn, drawings and such are always helpful to someone trying to do a fanclub page!

Of course, before you send anything it would be helpful if you know who and what I am and where to send it!

O.K. First, my name is Greg Baxx! That was may enough I am a student at Hope College in Holland, Michigan and all mail can be sent to me at the following address:

Greg Baxx
15 Centurion House
Holland, Michigan 49423

during school months of course!

What I'm doing here is another story entirely! It has been about two years since I revived and edited "The Graveyard Examiner" for *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, and actually I was just sitting around pretending to be a college student.

So one day I received this very interesting proposal from editor Jerry Weddle asking me if I would do a fanclub page of sorts for *Thriller!* So here I am and I'll try to do my best as this magazine progresses.

We'll try to do as much as we can, but remember, a fan club page is basically what you make it--no start those cards and letters coming in and share what you have to say with fans and readers of *Thriller!*

THE LON CHANEY PORTFOLIO!

A collection of 10 illustrations of the late Lon Chaney. The portfolio includes THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE PERILLOUS, Lon Chaney Puppets from all the movies mentioned above, Lon Chaney out of make-up, and (hold on to your mind) PAGE 1001111! All illustrations printed offset on heavy paper, plus an attractive folio cover. The portfolio is yours for \$8.00 plus 80¢ postage and handling. Send check or money order (no cash please) to: Bill Nelson, 18104 Purcell Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23288





DRACULA FANTASY in the 1930s

BY RONALD V. BORST

Forty or fifty years hence, when youthful film buffs of the 21st century are endeavoring to prepare their own lengthy and detailed articles on the horror and science-fiction productions of the sixties and seventies, they will undoubtedly encounter a great many titles which they may simply have to classify as "problems"—films which we may well consider quite common today, but which will be the rare or even lost films of future generations.

It may not prove to be difficult to surmise which kind of films may fall among this particular group. First of all, there will probably be a large number of rare exploitation films—the mudie-horror films—which are often rare even by today's standards in terms of distribution. Because of their obvious content, they will be immune from telescoping, and because of their poor qualities, will in all probability fade into oblivion.

Perhaps one step above these vehicles are the "quota quickies," or the cheaply made horror-of-films intended solely for the fast buck in quick play-offs. Again, due to their obsession with blood, sex and gore, their eventual fate seems sealed.

Another group of these future problems may stem back to the abundance of foreign-made productions, films produced anywhere from the Far East to Italy, which have never reached American theaters (or, films which aren't released in our country until several years after their original release under a different title, thereby creating all sorts of problems in terms of factual information). Furthermore, imagine the plight of the future film researcher confronted with the many pre-production titles, many of which are slated to film, but which never progress any further than pre-filming publicity. Even films with similarities such as identical casts and crew, i.e., the Italian films WAR OF THE PLANETS; WILD, WILD PLANETS; WAR BETWEEN THE PLANETS should have a great many future film students pounding their foreheads in utter frustration.

Looking backward an equal number of decades, to the years spanning from 1930 to 1935, the researcher of today will discover that there is a surprisingly large number of fantasy-oriented films which have yet to see the light of day insofar as current screenings or published criticism is concerned. It's true that most of the major classics of the thirties have always been with us through nationwide revivals and then through television, but it really wasn't too long ago that films such as MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, CHANGE THE MAGICIAN and THE GHOST seemed lost for eternity. This resurrection of the legendary horror-fantasy classics of the twenties and thirties has generally come about through a renewed interest in not only the fantastic genre, but the cinema in general.

Yet, what of the really obscure and undistinguished films of the era? Will they be revived for reexamination, or left to rot in their camps in some dusty archive? Do these films deserve a "second chance" in their world? Through long hours of research I've come to the conclusion that a great many of these films should not share the future fate of today's exploitation, etc. Therefore, in the hopes of wetting a great many appetites with information of some of the obscure films that were, let's go back a few generations and look at the really rare films which have, for the most part, long been forgotten.

While Universal's DRACULA is usually considered to be one of the first horror "talkies" to usher in the thirties' cycle of gothic films, it was actually preceded by several thrillers, most of which are seldom, if ever, seen today. Warner Brothers-First National's 1928 film, THE THUNDER was the first thriller with sound, and was followed in quick succession by both THE GHOST TALKIE and THE HAUNTED HOUSE the same year. The next year saw a veritable deluge of talking horror films, including 7 FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN, UNCLE WORM (Karloff's first talking film), THE 13TH CHAIR (Lucas's first), MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU, STRANGE CARNO and HOUSE OF HORROR. Most of the above, with the notable exception of MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, followed a general pattern set by most of the silent horror films—a setting which more often than not included an old dark house of sorts, replete of course, with accompanying torrential downpour and frequent flashes of lightning. The structure was hardly a normal house, but loaded with secret panels, trap doors, and some kind of purported supernatural manifestation menacing an attractive and hapless heroine. The conclusion usually pool-poached the concept of something actually monstrous by having the "monster" turn out to be some relative or close friend of the protagonists' gone mad.

This style of filmatic horror carried itself over into the initial years of the new decade in films like THE GORILLA, THE CAT CREEPS and THE BAT WHISPERS. All of these pictures had seen prior silent versions (which were adapted from previous stage plays) and all had that foreboding old mansion in which some cloaked monster or the like prowled...at night, of course. THE GORILLA was another Warner Brothers-First National release, directed by Bryan Foy (who later produced Warners' HOUSE OF WAX) and dwelt with the antics of a couple of comic private detectives hired by the owner of the house full of the expected doors et al, to route out a gorilla roaming about the place. During the proceedings, one detective dons a gorilla outfit, and there is a slapstick-like confusion. In short, the film was as concerned with its comic aspects as it was with its horror premise. Ralph Spence was responsible for the original play, and the film itself had been filmed in 1927. It saw a Ritz Brothers remake in 1939 (with Lugosi and Avelin) and I have read where Foxes GORILLA AT LARGE sees some of its basis to the play.

THE CAT CREEPS was Universal's first talking horror film, preceding DRACULA by nearly a year, and a remake of director Paul Leni's silent classic, THE CAT AND THE CANARY (1927), directed by Rupert Julian (who had directed—of at least—was given credit for directing—Chanay's THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA) the film is, as of this writing, considered to be lost. Authorities who have seen it infer as that it was inferior to the silent version, yet how could any Universal old house horror film of the early thirties be devoid of interest? The plot was identical to the silent version (and generally followed by the Bob Hope romp called THE CAT AND THE CANARY of '39): a group of heirs are called to the lonely estate to hear the midnight reading of the last testament of their deceased relative. When the lovely heroine is left the bulk of the estate, she immediately becomes the target for a hunchbacked creature with

a horrible visage. The family lawyer is murdered...dragged in to a secret passage by a claw-like hand, but in the final reel the killer is apprehended and disclosed as one of the sole heads of the state. Universal filmed a Spanish version utilizing Mexican performers (as they later did with DRACULA) and directed by George Medford. In my knowledge, this is also lost.

Thankfully, THE RAT WHISPERS has been resurrected from the grave and a classic it most certainly is! The film was a long-time staple on New York's 42nd Street grindhouse during the late thirties and forties, and continues to hold up as one of the finest of the old house horror films, surpassing either LOST IN THE CASINO or THE CHERRY ORCHARD. THE OLD DARK HOUSE in terms of sheer artistry in the creation of eerie atmosphere. The credit for this brilliance seems to solely be with the film's director, Roland West, who had filmed the silent version in 1926. In 1934, as well as Lon Chaney 1935 horror masterpiece, THE MONSTER, the 1931 version deserved an in-depth treatment than I can possibly give it here, but suffice to say that its camerawork (by Ray June and Robert Planck) is among the finest of its kind I have ever seen in any film of the thirties. Utilizing near-unobtainable and utterly fascinating tracking shots (a type of effect which has been replaced by the popular modern zoom shot), figures are sighted are sighted by the audience in the foreground, and followed in an unbreaking series of close shots by the camera as they silently run for what seems a mile, or more through dark lit drives into shadowy mansions. Evidently, long stretches of track were constructed, giving the camera crew the ability to roll right along with the running figures. The use of dialogue is sparing, and what there is unfortunately typical of the filmed stage plays of the era. The acting is often overly melodramatic, unintentionally humorous, and inferior to the visual work in the production. Thankfully, the character development of the super-criminal, "The Bat," is almost entirely constructed by visual scene rather than through lines in the script. The story of THE RAT WHISPERS revolves around the Bat's efforts to lay his hands on a large cache of stolen loot which is almost perfectly, stashed away in a secret room in the old house. Vincent Price acted in a fair third version for Allied Artists in 1959, but there is no comparison to the previous versions.

1930 offered a number of other fantastic films, among them Chaney's only talking film, a remake of THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY. The film survives, but only as a curiosity piece, notable only because of Chaney's voice manipulations. Warner's very strange adaptation of Edison Vane's play, OUTWITTED BOND, about a group of people aboard a ship and not knowing where it was going; they eventually discover they are dead and are sailing to Heaven or Hell.

The Germans produced yet another silent version of ALMAHNE which was eventually released in this country in 1934. Starring Brigitte (METROPHONE) Helm and Albert Bassermann, the film followed the basic "mad scientist" formula with Bassermann enacting the role of a scientist who creates a young girl. Some other films of the year included horror-romances such as AFTER THE POOL (a serial as well as a feature), KIDNIGHT MYSTERY, and IN THE NEXT ROOM. Paramount released a direct sequel to their '29 film Fu Manchu film selling it THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU. This film and the many films based on Sax Rohmer's creation will survey in an upcoming feature. Borderline films of a sort, such as SILENT STORIES (which contained a scene) and MYSTERY AT THE VILLA ROSE were also released during 1930, but are largely only vague memories today.

In 1929-30 saw two important breakthroughs in terms of talking of films, with the releases of the British HIGH TREASON (1929) and Fox's film DRACULA (1930). The former in creative ideas, and also released in a silent version. Primarily, it is worth screening today chiefly because of some exceptional effects work (depicting a future London on the verge in 1940 and the appearance of a young Raymond Massey in the role of the Duke of York) and of the opening of the film as well as some detailed research coverage in a past feature that it is

probably to well known to be considered a really rare film. Viewed today, the film emerges as an entertaining "game" film, especially with a backdrop which includes a significantly created model of New York City circa 1930, as well as a whimsical rocket flight to Mars.

Without question, DRACULA was also the first film with sound to explore the supernatural without forcing an illogical denouement explaining away the horror elements as something human in origin. Otherwise, most of the other '31 productions continued the trend of the previous decade's horror films. Warner's SYNTHESIS gave John Barrymore a chance to play a more sophisticated man as a mad hypnotist who seeks to place a beautiful young girl under his evil power. Some of the close-ups are still effective today, and there is one superb scene in which the camera pulls back from a medium shot of Dr. Seward, only to find it was across his face ally to rest within the room of the young girl under his power. It is deplorable that shots such as these, and those in THE RAT WHISPERS, were not employed in most of the early Universal classics.

SYNTHESIS was so successful that Warner's followed it up with a sequel remake called THE MAD GENIUS. The plot was basically the same, only in this case, Barrymore sought to extend his control over a young man instead. The film is often recalled today as one of Karloff's pre-FRANKENSTEIN vehicles in which he played the vicious father of the young hero during the opening reel.

Legend himself hadn't yet achieved the fame that DRACULA would ultimately bring him and a Warner Oland-Charlie Chan program called THE BRICK GARDEN, star him as a case who eventually turned out to be only one of the usual dozen red herrings found in these type of whodunit. Oland made his final appearance as Fu Manchu in Paramount's DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON and even played a villainous character called "Berie Karlor" (!) in Tiffany Pictures' DRUMS OF JEOPARDY. Tiffany also produced a very rare film called THE MONSTER KILLS with the ever popular Lyle Hamilton, but information on this is so vague, that the picture may never have seen final release (if it was indeed made as reported at this time).

Other lesser films of the year of the previous year included Paramount's MURDER BY THE CLOCK, with Erving Pichel (who acted in DRACULA'S DAUGHTER and directed DESTINATION MOON) as an insane character; a German film called KIBOTON-REINACHMANN and another called THE CABINET OF DR. LARIPIRI which appears to be non-horror, but is there any doubt from where the title comes? The film must be SECRET WITNESS, THE SPIDER and THE PHANTOM, or less concluded the offerings for the year with the exception of two films which I find to be exceptionally interesting.

The first of these, UNUSUAL SUSPECTS, THE MYSTERY OF A LOST FILM would probably qualify as a lost film and information seems to point towards a picture which pre-dated THE ANIMAL WORLD by some twenty-five years in attempting to develop the lost film concept. As with the Barrymore film, the Universal film contained some sequences featuring some stop-motion animation, and the real "mystery" of the film is centered around the question of who it was who did these sequences. Unlabeled in the original prebook, the fact may never be brought to light.

Another film of the time, and definitely a non-horror title in spite of its title, was MONSTERS OF THE DEEP--an underwater documentary. Nature Magazine of June of 1931 reviewed a film which they considered to be a documentary which was obviously a semi-fictional type of film which TAKARU, THE APE MAN was. The film was INGAU, produced by Congo Pictures. It is probably one of the last American silent motion pictures--certainly the last silent horror film. The review in Nature Magazine goes on to state that the film "presents to show colony of natives, newly discovered, from which, each year, a woman is taken to be sacrificed to the gorilla; and is replete with sensational 'shots'--of a gorilla carrying off a woman, of a gorilla and a man, of a gorilla attacking men of a native woman mourning the death of a gorilla; and other happenings equally startling in character." Amazingly, it seems that this publication seemed to really regard the picture as a realistic documentary. One of the film's characters (George) and for some reason, the character portrayed in THE RUE MOROQUE, the Martian in THE WAR OF THE WORLDS played one of the apes. In 1939, there was a GOR OF INGAU although I am fairly certain that the two films are unrelated except in title.



By 1934, horror films were in full swing. The pictures of this year made the year, both in terms of quality and quantity; probably the finest of the gothic film has ever seen. Some of the major films were WHITE ZOMBIE, THE OLD DARK HOUSE, THE MASK OF ZU WANGSHU, FRANKS, CREANDU THE MAGICIAN, THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME, WAMPIRE, WOODRUMS IN THE BLUE MOUNTAIN and DOCTOR X although there were an equal number or more of the minor films. One of the minor pictures which combined the elements of crime and horror was Columbia's lower-case BEHIND THE MASK which starred Jack Holt as an agent out to break a ring of dope smugglers. The film is a cracking horror picture, and when the film is over, the audience and Charlie Kieroff, I personally feel, the film is VAN HALEN's finest piece of thesping, giving him the dual role of a specialist doctor benign physician... the latter character being a cover-up for his nefarious underworld racket. The scene is the end of the film, the doctor is about to skin Holt alive, is one of the classic moments of cinema horror. Kieroff's role was more of a half-scarred underling but nevertheless enjoyable in letting us see a side of Kieroff we are seldom able to see in his film horror movies. Therefore, HERE'S THE MASK survives today and is continually telecast through Screen Cema's "Shock Theater" package of vintage Universal and Columbia horror films.

1932 saw a German-French-English co-production exploring the Atlantic legend which was originally released as THE HERRIN VON ATLANTIS (MISTRESS OF ATLANTIS) in Germany and distributed state-wide in 1939 as LOST ATLANTIS. The film starred Brigitta Helm, and was directed by the famous C. W. Faibst. The German's also expected one of their 1930 films, OTHER, which was released here under the title of DOCTOR HALLERSS. Directed by CALICAKI's director, Robert Weisse, the film dealt with the faculty theme most often found in the various Jekyll-Hyde adaptations and tales.

KNO Radio Pictures, while releasing THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME and reading KING KONG, released three other minor horror films: THE MURDERER'S PAW, 13 WOMEN, and SECRETS OF THE FRENCH POLICE. The first film was directed by the famous C. W. Faibst, which was one of the classic pieces by W. W. Jacobs with Krawell (THE MURDER) Fletcher cast as the young man who dies horribly in an accident, only to have his mutilated corpse washed back to life through the mystic powers of a doctor's paw. Faithfully adapted, the film's climax has the corpse washed back to the grave moments before it could be glimpsed by either the cast or the audience. 13 WOMEN, on the other hand, was a tale of racial vengeance with the beautiful Myrna Loy as the half caste young woman against those female companions who have been forced to live out at finishing school. With the aid of a nefarious Yogi (C. Henry Gordon), she sends each girl a horoscope which reveals a horrible death in store for each of them. The majority of girls take the warnings seriously, and are literally terrified into an early grave (similar to the effect Kieroff's character had on those who had caused his first death in THE WALKING DEAD). However, the final scene has Loy herself caught up in her own predictions whose death the Yogi had prophesied before his own death. The film is a well made, but is as low as tracks, being out over the tracks from an observation car, she imagines she sees the Swan's face in the darkness, and leaps to her death. Of note is that both films featured scenes composed by that dean of film, Max Erich.

Gregory Ratoff starred as a mad Russian general (shades of Kieroff) in SECRETS OF THE FRENCH POLICE. The film is basically a non-gothic film about an ex-Czarist officer who seeks to compromise the abdicated Russian Royalty and a girl he has found in the Anastasia, heir to the Russian throne as well as to the fortune of the Czar. He is thwarted in his plans, and it is revealed in the climax that the madman has in his spare time concocted such things as coating one of his victim's bodies with a substance so that she now resembles a marble statue.

The British filmed a number of macabre little films during this time. Several remakes of the silent successes included: THE HOWL OF THE BASKERVILLES and THE LODGER. The Holmes' film was released in 1931 and retitled in 1934. In April 1934, the following year by First Division, Robert Nessel had the role of Conan Doyle's detective, but the version is considered inferior to the '39 and '59 versions on the whole. A number of other rare British Holmes productions followed around this time, but space limits make it probable their discussion here. THE LODGER, the Jack the Ripper film based on the Maria Belloc Lowndes novel, was a remake of the 1926 Hitchcock triumph. It was retitled THE PHANTOM FLEET before being released at the height of the horror craze in 1934. Jack the Ripper film will be covered in a feature article which will appear in Gore Gumberson #21, so I will presently dispense with detail.

Three other mystery-horror films from Britain, CRIMINAL MIND, THE CONFESSION TO DEATH, and THE CROOKED TRAIN came out during the year for researchers. The first title was based on an Edgar Wallace novel about a young girl who comes to visit her future husband at the creepy family estate where she learns about more than she had suspected about her future in-laws. The film was

eventually released in this country as THE FRIGHTENED LADY, CONDEMNED TO DEATH supposedly had a condemned man returning from the grave to murder off those jurors who had convicted him, but the film's climax provided a reasonable explanation for the just before he had been sentenced, the guilty man had hypnotized a judge to carry out his gruesome revenge. THE CROOKED TRAIN was based on a play Arnold Ridley. A train crowded with passengers misadvised signal in 1923 and plunged through an open bridge into the river. Each year since, the local folk tell of the train with a scheduled or apparent destination which roars past the same little station in the English countryside, ending with the screams of passengers and the grinding of breaks—the same as on the original night of terror. On the night of one of the annual reenactments of the disaster, a group of stranded travelers listen to the tale of the night terror as is spun by the old station master. Minutes after he finishes his tale, he falls dead, and soon the whistle of an approaching train is heard above the clatter of the store. In the end, the film arrives at a creditable solution. The picture was released in 1931.

Horror comedies continued to prevail in a number of independent efforts such as CROOKED CIRCLE, ONE WAY PASSAGE, and a Wayfair Challenger & Priest production titled THE MONSTER WALKS with Nisha Asar. The latter film's "monster" was released as a comedy, suspected to be another villainous human in disguise. Other films like THE PHANTOM OF CRESTWOOD and THE PHANTOM OF PARIS contained more horror elements in their atmospheric set direction, than in their actual screenplay. THE 13TH GUEST, Mosog's last horror film, featured Ginger Rogers in the off-putting of her career in a script which followed the pattern set by THE CAT AND THE CANARY school of films. It was remade as Bela Lugosi's only color horror film, SCARRED TO DEATH (1947). WINDS AT LAW, the first Four released production of 1932, contained mysterious faces peering periodically at windows and other weird happenings, but Photoplay magazine noted at the time that the film had "...all of the props but none of the chills..." found in other films of the day. KNO released the Browning-Chapay 1927 silent film, THE SILENT GALLERY (no relation to KING KONG) with a swarthy Walter Huston in the role of the paralytic and vengeful "Flint," master of an area around the Congo due to his cunning ability to hold the natives in awe; he ultimately winds up as one of the most local of local films.

Box released one of the more intriguing films of 1932, which I've heard, continues to hold up well today. SIX HOURS TO LIVE, directed by William Dieterle (the former German actor who went on to direct such Hollywood excursions as ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY and THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME), featured Warner Baxter as Paul, a man representative of the tiny nation of Sylvaria at a world-wide trade conference. Paul has made bitter enemies by his stubborn opposition to the international agreement under consideration and, in the desperation to have his sedition charges dropped, he invites his enemies to a banquet. An eccentric scientist (George Marion) happens to be present at the time and brings Paul back to life through a life-giving ray machine he has perfected. However, Paul's "life allotted" is only a brief six hours. During this time he saves his country from being wrecked from ambitious politicians as well as capturing his murderer. Just before the time runs out, he smashes the life-restoring machine crying, "Only God should control death," probably in a manner reminiscent of the latter Kieroff clichés in his mad doctor films for Columbia and others.

There had been occasional forays into science-fiction during the cinema's silent years, it wasn't until 1933 that this type of film began arriving in any numbers. The first of the films of the twenties and sixties, early as the screen seemed primarily concerned with scientific futurism, wars, future societies, scientific development, and natural disasters. One of the re-releases was KNO's prod-



uction of *THE FIRST FIGHT*, based on the screenplay by the same writer. The theatrical production advocated pacifism, but the cinematic adaptation not only advocated pacifism in part, but heroism where "just" wars were concerned. The picture opened in the last days of the First World War on the battlefield of Europe. Diana Wynyard played a nurse who lowers her killed in action son to the ground in the arms of a German soldier. She is then killed in the same manner. Her death is a burning hatred of future similar massacres. Before the birth of her child, Laura had married Edward Seward (Lewis Stone), who by 1940 had become the U.S. Secretary of State. His views are of a pacifist nature, but when the U.S. is forced to declare war on Germany, he has no choice but to go to war. Laura, who has no child, is heartbroken support. But Laura refuses to do this, as does her grown foster son, Bob (Phillips Holmes). Bob ultimately changes his out-look when he learns that his real father died a hero in the Great War, and after he witnesses the enemy's air force bombing New York City. The film concludes with the young man fighting that other man alive.

high version is quite mediocre in every respect save for those in special effects. I rather suspect, although I am currently unsure, that the English may have utilized German-created effects from the first version for their own which would explain why their film's effects are so superior over the actual story as filmed under the direction of Mearns (HOW TRISON/Elvey). Such a practice has been used before, in both GMD and F.P.I., for example.

smack. Woodford discovers that Gorman is the murderer of both Hewitt and Evelyn, and almost becomes the madman's third victim before Woodland's assistant, Jerry Evans (Bill Patrick) sounds the alarm thereby bringing down a uniformed officer storming into the zoo. Gorman on one loose a number of the big cats in his last bid effort to escape, but the ruse backfires and he is forced to take refuge in an empty cage...empty that is, but for the presence of a gigantic box constructor, and you can guess the outcome.

Unfortunately, while **MURDERS IN THE ZOO** benefits from a virtuoso performance by Atwill, as well as some ingeniously devised murders, it is often a plodding piece of hokum loaded with an overdose of comic relief provided by the top-billed Charlie Ruggles as the zoo's publicity man. His effect on the film is not unlike Lee Tracy's in **DOCTOR**.

Monogram's **THE SPHINX** was a "wastefully light and shivery little picture" according to one critic of the time. Atwill played Jerome Breen, supposedly a deaf and dumb stock broker. Breen is placed on trial after a night watchman has identified him, however he is released when the night watchman recalls that the suspect asked him the time; since Breen is proven to be incapable of speech, he could not possibly be the guilty man. Actually, four other stock brokers have been murdered in the past month, and Breen has killed all of them. How did he achieve this ruse? Quite simple, for as a murderous brother he pretends he is both deaf and dumb, and when the court attempts to prove his guilt, he craftily substitutes his real deaf and dumb brother! An ingenious element of the plot was that his brother is kept behind a secret panel in Breen's house, and released by simply striking a certain piano key. Eventually, as you will of course have guessed, Breen's true colors are revealed and he meets his usual macabre end.

Another minor film of 1933-also Atwill-was Chesterfield's **STRANGER PEOPLE** which the *New York Herald Tribune* commented on at the time as being "befuddled, and confused." Presumably, the film began with a dozen different people from different walks of life being invited to the home of one John Davis. After arriving out of the expected driving storm, they learn that they have formally sworn together on a jury which convicted Davis to be hanged for murder. Their host is the attorney of the man condemned to death and he stages a murder to illustrate how he believed the jury convicted his client on circumstantial evidence. However, the participant of the stage murder has really been killed. That's where the real mystery should begin, but reviewers of the time noted that the film tended to lapse into mediocre slap-stick and cliché attempts to horrify after its intriguing opening. Who was the murderer? None other than the said John Davis, who had substituted a look-alike to die in his place.

Paramount's **SUPERNATURAL**, made by the Halperin brothers, Edward and Victor (the duo responsible for **WHITE ZOMBIES**), featured a bravura performance by Allan Dinehart as Paul Davian, a fake spiritualist who had been on the intimate terms with one Ruth Rosen/Vivienne Cohn-who who had strangled three of her former lovers with her exceptionally powerful hands, and who had been sent to the electric chair. Unknown to Davian, Doctor Nowet-an (H.B. Warner) has experimented with the dead girl's body following her execution, and her spirit has escaped into the body of socialite Rose Courtney (Carole Lombard). Davian attempts to steal the body and so, so me, not knowing that it is Ruth's spirit controlling her actions. He finally ends up trying to escape from her clutches, only to trip and hang himself in the process. The picture is often seen on various television channels and survives the wear of time very well in its remarkably eerie and supernatural suspense.

Other rare films of the year include a French film called **UNDER THE MOON OF MOROCCO**, directed by Julien Duvall. Although sources felt that the work fell short of American efforts of the period, the plotline which alibi-beggar places a curse on five Europeans. "Blad-

ee" seems interesting. "Authentic pictures of strange Eastern ceremonies and exciting photography seemingly cast the proper atmospheric spell," said one reporter upon its release. **THE DEATH KISS** featured the last photographs of Lugosi, and the picture, which was being shown under the title seemed to capitalize on Lugosi's DRACULA while in actuality it was a non-gothic Hollywood murder mystery in which Lugosi was reduced to playing one of the lesser bad herring. Principal Adventure Pictures released something called **VEODOO**, which was a one man effort for Ray, the mad part, being depicted as directed and scripted by Pauline Vance, who had been a sergeant in the Marine Corps who was stationed on the island of La Gonave, thirty miles off Haiti. There he won the friendship of natives, and returned in 1932 during his retirement to film a travelogue-documentary on the local customs and superstitions of the island of the same name. The film ran for barely a half hour, and contains a few sacrificial rites such as the various animal sacrifices performed in Voodoo ceremonies.

BEFORE DAWN (RKO) had been penned by Edgar Wallace while he was in Hollywood, shortly before his death, and developed into a script by the director of both **WHITE ZOMBIES** and **SUPERNATURAL**-Garnett Weston. Irving Pichel directed Stuart Erwin, Dudley Digges and Warner Oland in a basically gangland story set in a haunted house and in which the police are aided by a femme clairvoyant. Speaking of seers, the Germans also filmed a picture called **THE SEER** during the same year, which is not to be confused with the 1935 Claude Rains film of the same name.

1934 brought forth with it a host of obscure titles such as **BLACK MOON**, **THE TELL-TALE HEART** (aka **BUCKET OF BLOOD**), **THE DOUBLE DOOR**, **THE WITCHING HOUR**, **BEHIND THE CURTAIN**, **SECRET OF THE LOOM**, **MYSTERY OF MR. X**, **RETRIBUTION OF THE TERROR**, **SECRET OF THE CHATRAI**, **THE NINTH GUEST**, **MURDER IN THE MUSEUM**, **POO**, **THE MOONSTONE** and **ONE PRIORITIZED NIGHT** amongst others.

Of these above named pictures, **THE DOUBLE DOOR** and **THE WITCHING HOUR** may still be found on certain late, late shows in certain parts of the country. The first film is chiefly remembered because of Mary Morris' diabolic portrayal of an insane old woman out to get the family jewels, murdering or ruining everyone who steps in her way. Eventually, she finds herself alone with the jewels, but trapped in the house's secret panel. **THE WITCHING HOUR** was a 1934 melodrama, set in a house of illegal gambling houses, and was also clairvoyant enough to know when the police are about to close in on his establishment. He unintentionally causes his daughter's fiancée to murder his rival, and begs a retired judge (Sir Guy Standing) to defend the boy in court. The judge at first declines, when the spirit of the boy's mother visits him and begs him to accept the case, the judge comes out of retirement and the lad is eventually acquitted. David Goren recently reviewed this film in the pages of his own magazine, *Pantastic Worlds*, and explains that the film is seldom seen today because of its "particularly unfavourable view of Negroes."

Edgar Allan Poe's **The Tell-Tale Heart** found a 1934 British version which was released (or re-released) in the United States as **BUCKET OF BLOOD**. The film supposedly opened in an asylum where a young man relates how he killed an old man because of his evil eye. He hides the man's body under the floorboards of his house, but he is unable to conceal his guilt when he continually imagines he hears the man's beating heart. It is interesting to note that when the film was released as **BUCKET OF BLOOD** that its artwork more closely paralleled the EC comic style of atmospheric blood and gore scenes than any other artwork I've seen on any film. It is doubtful if the papers would permit such bloody advertising today!

Another British film of 1934 was **THE LIVING DEAD**. "Not a ghost! Not a vampire! Not a zombie! What is **THE LIVING DEAD**?" screams the ads in the film's 1940 American release paperback. George Curzon was a physician who had discovered a serum that produced complete cataplexy...so complete that any doctor would certify the victim as having died of heart failure. He alone possessed the anti-toxin, but while escaping from the police during the film's climax (for having misused his discovery, naturally), he places himself in a state so that his assistant, a wife who returns to her home near Haiti, moodily reviving her sympathy "with the doctor to his doom."

BLACK MOON, a Columbia film with Fay Wray and Jack Holt, saw the "30's" favorite scream as a secretary to Dorothy Burgess playing a wife who returns to her home near Haiti, moodily reviving her sympathy "with

Author's Note: We made an error on **THE NAT WITCHERS**, it was released on Nov. 20, 1930, and not in 1931 as previously indicated. My thanks to Don Willis, sidling in the uncovering of some of the films discussed.

Art Credits:
Bill Nelson-front cover, pp.
Jim Garrison-back cover, pages 1-6,
18, letterheads.

the throbbing religious impulses of the natives. Too complex a parson to share it simply, she becomes a priestess, participating in sacrificial rites as a high priestess. Pay sends for Dorothy's husband (Jack Holt) and he arrives in the nick of time to prevent the sacrifice of his child, and to learn that he prefers a screaming Pay to a fanatical Dorothy for his spouse. For William Bell, a famed for his Universal-Home films of the next decade directed, and returned to Columbia in 1935 to direct Karioff in a generally under-rated horror film, **THE BLACK ROOM**, which is included in the Screen Gems' package and is at the least, a powerful "classer."

Henry B. Walthall, D.W. Griffith's "Little Colonel" in **THE BIRTH OF A NATION**, made a starring appearance in a very minor Willie Kent feature of that year, **MURDER IN THE MUSEUM**, which had the customary hooded figure running amok. David Manners, whose career was also on the decline, starred in Monogram's cheaply made and (as I've heard) boring version of Wilkie Collins' novel **THE MOORSTONE**. Universal made **SECRET OF THE CHATEAU**, the same year—another film in the "Shock Theater" group—but its only claim as a member of the film genre lies in its cinematographic sets.

The subject of the Loch Ness monster has always been of interest to the general public, yet only occasionally filmed. **THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES** had some fun with the legend, and it wasn't long ago that the British turned the same legend into another light-hearted romp called **WHAT A WHOPPER!** but the 1936 **SECRET OF THE LOCH** (which has been televised) is another film this critic would dearly enjoy seeing. The film's plot had a scientist attempting to convince his colleagues that an exceptionally rare monster had caused the hatching of a prehistoric egg in the waters of the famed Loch. The story, from what I've read about it, seems far more concerned with romance and in the professor's questionable reputation than in the actual monster (which is eventually sighted once, at the end, but not destroyed). One original review noted that the creature was "neither very terrifying or very convincing," yet the film may be worthwhile for any nocturnal sequences set on the fog-bound loch. Another film of the same title seems to have seen an English production of 1957, but unfortunately, this remains (if, indeed, it is a remake) seems more mysterious than its forerunner.

THE NINTH GUEST was another of those films in which a murderer gathered a number of enemies together with the purpose of murdering them off, one by one. I would suspect that the most famous of these kind of films is **AND THEN THERE WERE NONE**, based on Agatha Christie's novel. In this Columbia feature, eight people are invited to a penthouse party only to discover themselves prisoners. One by one, they are being eliminated by the "ninth guest" who is "death." Unlike **AND THEN THERE WERE NONE** or **THE LITTLE INDIAN**, the end found a few more people alive when the murderer is disclosed as being one of the intended victims.

Columbia also made a film called **FOG** in 1936. It was sea-going mystery set aboard an ocean liner with the title word covering up a number of murders, a clairvoyant is about to unravel the mystery when he herself is murdered! **DRUMS OF YUCCO**, a Robert Minto Production al-

so known as **LOUISIANA** was "an interesting experiment which failed to sell in spots," according to **Photoplay's** review. The film featured an all Negro cast in a story about a group of blacks torn between their pastor's teaching and their age-old belief in voodoo practices.

Warner Brothers' **THE RETURN OF THE TERROR** told of a scientist who has pleaded insanity in order to escape a conviction for a series of murders which he did not commit. Pleading from the madhouse in a hearing (in fact, all of these films had this if nothing else!) he turns up in his old sanatorium and begins a game of hide-and-seek with a reporter, a rare collection of lunatics, and even a pair of crooks. My memory is hazy on the film, but the film's plot was hardly macabre even though it did have a number of spooky scenes of sinister figures lurked in an overcast walking about the houses during the night.

THE MYSTERY OF MR. X, based on a novel entitled **Mystery of the Dead Police** found Scotland baffled by the murders of several policemen who have been stabbed to death on their respective beats. The slayer is in the habit of sending a message to newspapers warning the authorities that another slaying of the law is to be his victim that night. The film was a variation on the Jack the Ripper murders, with policemen substituting for "ladies of the night." Macabre's ONE FRIGHTENED NIGHT was hardly more than another of the murders of policemen in the same house during a stormy night replete with the comic humor or which seemed to go hand-in-hand with a mad killer on the loose.

By 1935, the first American horror cycle of any proportion had reached its peak with films like **THE RAVEN**, **THE BLACK ROOM**, **BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **MAD LOVE**, and **MARK OF THE VAMPIRE** heralding the end, which was, of course, to come the following year with the decline of overseas' markets in horror productions. Lugosi, while starring in marvelous top-flight productions like **THE RAVEN** and **MARK OF THE VAMPIRE**, seemed to disappear in a cheaply made of melodrama called **MURDER BY TELEVISION** (Invisible). The film had to do with a professor Murnighan's revolutionary improvements with television. On the night set for a public demonstration of his invention, the professor's plans for the night are suspected, chief of which is the professor's assistant, Arthur Perry (Lugosi). Eventually, Lugosi is murdered, but then miraculously turns up in the finale to reveal the true killer, much as he had two years earlier in Columbia's **NIGHT OF TERROR**, another rare and thriller of the year was **INVISIBLE DEATH** (Invisible), directed by Frank (THE VAMPIRE BAT, CONDEMNED TO LIVE) Strayer, in which the killing was committed by means of a huge planetarium projector light of a certain star acting on a photo-electronic cell which set up a vibration that worked a contrivance that killed the victim.

Universal's **THE GREAT IMPRESSION** is often looked as a spy melodrama, yet it contained a great many macabre anecdotes including a secret panel, clenching hands, and even a "monster" of the "Black Box" which turns out to be more than ghastly than Frye. For some reason, however, Frye is only glimpsed in long shots, perhaps because Universal deemed his make-up unworthy of Frye was a good guy for a change, a physician in fact, in Republic's **THE CRIME OF DR. CRESPI** which starred another actor-director whose career was also plummeting downward at the time—Eric von Stroheim. Variety mentioned that von Stroheim's role "does not take his very far," and indeed, his character seems a one-dimensional one... Crepi is another in the long line of insane scientists who have developed a mad science discovery, only to misuse it on an unsuspecting public. In this case, he has discovered a drug which induces suspended animation. He uses it on a scientific rival, and then proceeds to have his buried alive. Frye, along with Paul Guilfoyle, are the benevolent doctors who discover Crepi's horrible crimes, and who ultimately bring him to justice. The film was loosely based on Poe's **The Hound of the Baskin's** and remains a minor horror film today, much like von Stroheim's film **THE LADY AND THE MONSTER** of 1944.

In **THE GHOST WALKS** (Invisible, 1935) another film directed by Strayer, the plot followed the theme set in the attempts to do but non-macabre play and film(s). **SEVEN KEYS TO BALDAPATE**, a playwright lures his producer to an old house where he stages the first act of his new play, **The Ghost Walks**, for him. Unlike **7 KEYS TO BALDAPATE**

GUARANTEED PICTURES PRESENTS

Bela Lugosi

A Mystery Of The Sea That Has Baffled Three Generations

IN "The Mystery Of The Sea That Has Baffled Three Generations"



with Shirley GREY • Cliff McLAGLEN



Just about everybody alive has written about the notorious Stanley Kubrick 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, at one time or another. In fact, a whole book entitled *The Making of Kubrick's 2001* was cleverly put together by Jerome Aron, and I understand has sold well.

I feel that there is no question about it that 2001 is a masterpiece, and probably the greatest single science-fiction film ever made. But I must humbly admit that, like most, I was hesitant to say so at first. I wrote a very short rave on it for my high school paper on the very first month of its release in Los Angeles, and a relatively longer, but still brief, review in the *Washington Evening Star* a while back. My comments at the time were favorable, but reserved, and I had only seen the film once. It was not until several viewings later that I began to grasp the power, the beauty, and the significance of Kubrick's monumental work.

Like most films that are ahead of its time, it takes a while for critics and general audiences to realize its true power. 2001 grows on the viewer, as many masterpieces of the past like Welles' *CITIZEN KANE* or Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*. One viewing is not sufficient to look beneath the overpowering surface of the film into its profounder aspects, thematically and aesthetically.

The general feeling among the most American critics and audiences at the time was that it was slow-moving, overlong, pretentious, and self-indulgent, not to forget boring. Looking at the film uncritically and superficially, it is all of these things, but for positive reasons, not obviously negative. The tempo of the film is slow, but appropriately so, not as a measure of Kubrick's supposed incompetence. Deliberate, unbarred pace lends 2001 a totally unique stylistic texture and feeling, a solemn mood of surface calm and placidity, betrayed by sudden and unexpected intrusions.

In the opening sequence, the Dawn of Man, a series of calm, placid tableaux of early man is unfolded. Suddenly, out of the left-hand corner of the screen, a leopard lurches forward unseen, killing one of the apemen. It's a startling, telling moment that indicates the threat of sudden danger everywhere, and the scene establishes this with powerful accuracy. This motif continues in the film, when the black monolith its signal into the universe, and especially when HAL takes over the ship. Kubrick handles these accounts so startlingly that the film takes on an uneasy atmosphere which becomes quite disturbing and unshakable.

Obscurity is one of the major complaints leveled against 2001, but not any more I think, with films like *BLOW-UP*, *HARRISBURG, PAINT BLANK*, *DEATH IN VENICE* and many others of surface obliqueness around that might be misconstrued as obscurity. The very simplicity and austerity of Kubrick's cinematic detailing of action

and character obviously confuses the viewer, and therefore they believe the film incomprehensible. 2001 is a gut level experience, an essentially oppressive film with long takes that lead into more long takes, and one dialogue non-sequitur leading into another. One makes of it, and the bizarre, controversial ending, what one makes of it. No central explanation of the various phenomena can be hinted at, except what the person himself gives to it. So many interpretations have been given that I find it virtually impossible to add to the astounding possibilities already expounded. But 2001, is no ink-blot test, but something that inexplicably reaches far deeper than a psychological examination, and something which I am neither qualified for or prepared to explain.

Its eventual financial success in spite of everything going against it it might well be construed as the younger audiences discovering its postmodern and powerful, almost hallucinatory imagery. It would be unfortunate if this were the case for it demands a film of unrelenting visceral impact into a collage of audience-pleasing special-effects with no subtext to justify its usage. Of course the effects are stunning and absolutely beautiful, but that's beside the point. If visuals were pointless or superficially over-emphatic, as in *STAR 80*, then the cinema would dissolve into a kindergarten where all sorts of irresponsibilities take place. If this generation tries to revolutionize film, using the audiovisuals of 2001 as a textbook without a conscience and personal commitment, then the cinema is doomed to impersonal self-extinction.

But I am optimistic, and believe that many people have looked into 2001 with broad perception and found a film of true depth and meaning. The best, most insightful reviews I think, were by Ellis Platte and F.A. MacKinnon in the Winter, 1969 issue of *Film Comment*; Don Daniele in the summer, 1968 issue of *Film Magazine*; Tim Hunter, Stephen Kaplan, and Peter Jarril's review in *The Harvard Crimson*, reprinted in *Film Magazine*.

It's strange that the reasons for admiring 2001 are so vast, complex and diverse, but the praise from people like Judith Christ, Stanley Kaufmann, and Pauline Kael are all narrow-minded, prejudiced, and all basically seem the same arguments as everybody else.

It may be true that by the very fact of its slow, eye-ravaging pace that people will either be compelled by it or fall asleep. Very, very few people have taken the neutral ground on 2001. One loves it or hates it, and it becomes almost as simple as that.

--Dale Winogura



Film Reviews written by Eddie C. Bertin, John N. Dawson, Robert L. Jerome, Jerry Waddell and Dale Winogura.

Eddie C. Bertin in Belgium.
THE BALLAD OF THE DOOMED LOVERS
The young, bearded director-producer Roland Lethes has been earning himself quite a reputation the last few years with his short films. Lethes is from Brussels (Belgium), and all his films, diving into excesses of gore, horror, sexual sadism, symbolism and pseudo-political comments are usually banned from the normal theaters, and are only shown in private clubs. A recent projection of some of his works in a university in Gent went under the doubtful eye of the censor, and the attending people before being admitted to the showing room had to sign the statement that they would not be very offended by what they could watch on the screen. We had the opportunity to see two of his best-known films, the reputed *LA FEE SANGUINAIRE* (THE BLOODTHIRSTY FAIRY) which was widely covered in the French horror or filmazines *Morpheus* du *Pentagone* and *Miroir du Fantastique*, and his *BALLADE DES AMANTS DAMNES* (THE BALLAD OF THE DOOMED LOVERS) at the Belgian SF Convention "Esfanon II" last year, and were able to see with our own eyes that his reputation has indeed been deserved.

Having commented separately on the symbolical saga of murder, vicious cruelty and sadism which constitutes *THE BLOODTHIRSTY FAIRY* we will stick to *THE BALLAD OF THE DOOMED LOVERS*. The picture runs only for about 15-20 minutes, and is in black and white. The colorless use of these films which would have been spelt by the use of color. There is a musical background, but no dialogue, and the story is very simple. A rather mistletoe young girl, working in a hospital, drugs a couple of lovers, two beautiful specimens of mankind, and injects them with a fluid which causes a cellular breakdown, killing the two. In a vivid and disorienting bleeding, the two are killed in a disorienting bleeding, with a mad, maddening, and with an ax chop their murderess into pieces. The whole film through seems an ode to horror, and just can't be seen without a shiver. Almost everything is filmed in darkened rooms, where the lurking shadows seem to spread into the theater. I especially recall a single shot of the injection needle, descending into the palm of one of the victims. The make-up of the "doomed lovers" is really marvelous: two human faces that are beginning to crack as pieces of flesh rot away, and thick blood begins seeping through. The clinical coldness of the real murder scenes in the part of the film slowly changes into a weird of unreal life and nightmare, the return of the two lovers as filthy being only very vivid grimaces, but the scene changes into a chaotic reality of brutal murder. Correctly, a Belgian reviewer compared it to Anthony Dawson's *AMANTI D'OLIVE TOMBA* (LOVERS FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE known in the U.S.A. as *NIGHTMARE CASTLE*), but where Dawson's film is straight classic horror all through, except in a few erotic scenes, Lethes' film starts a very western horror and then changes into a gothic nightmare. Lethes has been accused of exclusively making his films to shock, he simply stated that he wanted to break down his own taboos, that he made his films for his own enjoyment.

Among his other films we can also mention *OUTRAGES*, *THE SUFFERING OF A DEADLY HURT BOY*, *GERMA FLOWER PROJECT*, and *THE VAMPIRE OF THE CEMETERY*, but these are only the experimental-underground type of film, but again basically on the basis of horror and sexuality.

THE TELL OF ASHER

In blood-red colors, a man's face swims into focus, his mouth distorted in an endless grin of terror. The sooty enlarges, and a group of men in white robes and scarlet capes, hovering their faces, are putting the man on an old sacrificial stone among ruins. One of the hooded men takes away his cap, and shows his grinning face, his eyes lurking behind dark brown sun-glasses

He approaches, raises a golden knife. The knife strikes down, blood runs, and there is a prolonged yell of pain and terror.

So starts the promising short-film, *THE TELL OF ASHER*, produced in color by studio E, entirely filmed in Gent, one of the oldest cities in Flanders, director/producer Freddy Verhaeghe has already made some short films before, though exclusively black and white, and mostly short documentaries. His eye for striking aspects, centering the image on small, also unimportant objects instead of bringing greater dramatic views, show his specialty in documentary material (as an example, there's a sequence where the camera focuses on the white-blue blinking light of an ambulance, instead of showing the whole car itself). Co-director is Jean Deskalides, though it seems that his part in the film was exclusively financial. Deskalides however has made a reputation in the past with short, weird films, *THE GARDIAN OF THE CEMETERY* (occult murder mystery), *THE EXPERIMENT* (thriller), *THE TRIST* (psychological fantasy) and *BIRI* (a family short film), all based on screenplays by Gentian mystery & horror author Roger d'Exatyl. Deskalides is now working on the production of a feature length film, *6-CALVET STREET*, filmed in Belgium, Bruges and starring a striking young actress, *THE LADIES VIKINGHOGE*, which has already been reprinted as *NUMEROUS IN BLOOD* and will now see a third re-edition under the film title. Socialization, as in all the films of Studio E and Deskalides, is by Roger Verhaeghe. The shortness of *THE TELL OF ASHER* gives it even more striking effect on unreality and nightmare. After the knife strikes down, the "victim" lies in a bed, with a shriek in his own bed. We learn that he has been having the same nightmare for weeks (dialogue is in English), and he decides not to use his car, but takes a bus to his office. In the crowded bus, a man sits in front of him reading a newspaper. The man slowly drops the newspaper, exposing his dark brown sunglasses and an evil inner. A golden knife, smeared with blood rises and strikes him in a screaming Asher awakes, amidst the crowd in the bus. He continues his way on foot, expecting to see the menacing shadow with the sunglasses and knife everywhere, throwing fearful glances to all corners, and is nearly run down by a motorcyclist. When he opens his office door, he finds the waiting for his secretary, but at his yell changes into his secretary who fearfully says that if anything is wrong, Asher is unable to do his work, and slowly sinks down against the whirlpool of his nightmare. The strange man enters from a side door and approaches Asher, who stumbles backwards trying to evade the knife. Shrieking, crashes through the window on the street stooping, like a bird, to the ground. He is brought to an urgent brain operation. He is brought into the operating room, while nurses make everything ready. Slowly Asher opens his eyes, everything is dim, then things start to come into focus. He is watching the broad back of the surgeon, who slowly turns around. Above the masked face are the brown sunglasses, and there is a horrible shrieking in the surgeon's throat as he comes to Asher, the glowering lancelet thrust in his hand.

Georges Bantout gives a good interpretation of the terrified Asher, though his "screams" sound more like groans rather than yells, the sound a desperate animal makes. Two kinds of colors are used, strong scarlet red, blue and green for the "nightmare" sequences, and extremely faded colors (like those in the first parts of *DIRTY MOTHERS*) for the "awakened" sequences. For Asher, though the city, which somehow are able to underline the difference between the gray every-day reality and Asher's vivid dream world. The sound is hard and cruel during the dream sequences, often accompanied by a weirdly playing piano tune, all music created by Willy D'Haese and Leon Selwyn.

It was for a first try in the realm of the macabre, we hope it inspires Studio E for more films in the same vein. Eddie C. Bertin, Editor's Note: In future issues of *Thriller*, Mr. Bertin will be writing a regular column on the fantasy films in Belgium, and he will be reviewing the flicks we won't be seeing in the U.S.A. as well.

John D. Dull
THE ANOMNEA STRAIN A Robert Wise Production for Universal Pictures. In Panavision and technicolor. Running time: 131 minutes. Screenplay by Nelson Gidding from the novel by Michael Chrichton. Produced and directed by Robert Wise. Director of photography, Richard H. Kline, A.S.C. Production designed by Boris Levin. Art director, William R. R. Set decorations, Ruby Levitt. Film Editors, Stuart Gilmore and John W. Holmes. Special effects by Douglas Trumbull and James Shourt. Sound, Walden O. Watson, James Alexander and Ronald Pierce. Production Manager, Ernest B.

Welmayer, Assistant director, Ridgeway Gallow, Costumes, Helen Colvig, Make-up, Bud Westmore, Hair Stylist, Larry Carmichael, Music composed by Gil Melle, Cast: Arthur Hill (as Dr. Jeremy Stone), David Wayne (Dr. Charles Dutton), James Olson (Dr. Mark Hall), Kate Reid (Dr. Ruth Levitt), Paula Kelly, George Mitchell, Hanson Bieri, Kenneth Wardock, Richard O'Brian, Peter Robbe, Eric Chalmers.

THE ANTHROMEDA STRAIN is the Robert Wise film version of Michael Christen's best-selling novel. Wise directed a science-fiction masterpiece, **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**, and here returns to the genre after an absence of two decades. This thriller is something of a micro-biological whatdunit set in an underground laboratory where a group of scientists have gathered to analyze a strain of disease bacteria that threatens to destroy all life.

The first half-hour, involving the discovery and exploration of a town entirely wiped out by the virus is brilliantly effective. Wise unfortunately allows the middle portion of the film to drag somewhat as most of the complex experimental processes are all that is interesting. Kenneth Bulaie neatly at the final, however and the climactic race against time to prevent a mass regeneration of "the anthromeda strain" should keep you fascinated.

THE ANTHROMEDA STRAIN is, as was **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**, a warning against irresponsible militarism. Many science-fiction buff see **DAY**--as something of an elaborate fantasy with "Klato," the alien having an ominous message of God. **THE ANTHROMEDA STRAIN** is not subject to the same allegorical consideration but it is an obvious plea (especially that there is speculation that the strain was brought to Earth deliberately for experimentation in new forms of germ warfare) for complete abandonment of research in biological weaponry.

Amazingly, Wise prefaced the film with an announcement that it was based on top-secret government files which have not been released to the public. This is of course, intended only to give the proceedings which follow a documentary flair. It takes a satiric bite in view of the recent breaking developments concerning the Pentagon Papers.

Performances by Arthur Hill, David Wayne, James Olson and Kate Reid are uniformly good and note Gil Melle's atmospheric electronic music score.

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS Released by Censini. Releasing Corporation for Maron Films Limited. Running time: 87 minutes. A Henry Lange Production. Directed by Harry Kessel. Screenplay Harry Kessel, Pierre Drouot, and J.J. Aniel. Director of Photography, Edward Van Den Enden. Art director, Francoise Hardy. Music by Francoise De Roubaix. Special-effects by Eugene Hendricks & Thierry Hamand. Edited by Gust Verschuuren and Germa Bosen. Production Manager, Paul Collet. Cast: Delphine Seyrig (Countess Elizabeth Bathory), Daniela Gasmat (Valerie Chiltren), John Karlan (Stefan Chiltren), Andrea Rau, Paul Esser, Georges Jamin, Joris Collet, Fone Rademakers.

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS would probably be best appreciated by horror film buffs with more advanced cinematic taste. It is a hair-raising thriller which has been compared favorably to Roger Vadim's **BLOOD AND ROSES**, which has in itself been one of three adaptations of the novel **Carriage**.

Delphine Seyrig is Countess Bathory, a supposedly 40 year old woman traveling with her female-secretary-mistress-lover, Bathory is in fact a vampire who has earned eternal youth by feeding in the blood of young virgins and she soon has newlyweds Stefan and Valerie Chiltren (John Karlan and Daniela Gasmat) under her spell with tragic consequences for all concerned.

The film is for the most part a somberly breeding and reasonably effective thriller. There are flaws, but they are minor when compared to the film's overall lyric style. Miss Seyrig is neither sexy nor over-the-top of an all prevailing evil. Barbara Steele has done this sort of thing much better, and we never know if Mr. Karlan is a sexual sadist, especially when he beats the nude Miss Gasmat, or under supernatural control. I somehow suspect a combination of the two.

It is like this when Karlan accidentally kills the death of Seyrig's companion after forcing her into a shower stall. The legend of "running water" and vampirism is vaguely hinted at but the unattractive film-goer will not realize the connection and misinterpret the girl's persistent reluctance to sexual prudishness rather than intense fear.

Harry Kessel's low-key direction may make the standard sex and gore scene needless, but there should annoy the brooding atmosphere. Note a very well filmed finale ending with the passing over of Miss Gasmat into the world of the undead. There is considerable nudity but it is valid within the context of the circumstances and the production as a whole. --John R. DuVall Robert J. Jerome

THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBBS British, American International. Released in June, 1971. Running time: 94 minutes. Moribund color. Executive producers, Samuel L. Arkoff and James H. Nicholson. Produced by Louis M. Heyward and Ronald S. Dumas. Directed by Robert Fuest. Director of photography, Herman Warelak. Make-up by Trevor Cresswell. Cast: Vincent Price (Dr. Anton Phibes), Joseph Cotton (Dr. Vaselious), Virginia North (Valuina), Peter Jeffrey (Inspector Trotter), Hugh Griffith (the Rabbi), Terry-Thomas (Dr. Lommetrust).

British film critic John Crite once admitted, while reviewing a minor Vincent Price film (**DIARY OF A MAD MAN**), that he had to fight the inclination to send the actor a telegram reading, "Congratulations! You've done it again!"

Crite went on to observe, quite astutely, that in the midst of a "gunk script, bad handling, limp costars, many acts, choppy editing, old Vincent takes them all in his stride...in his own way, he is quite a stylist."

Price's latest motion picture, reportedly his 100th film but (if we counted correctly) more likely his 79th, is **THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBBS**, and it happily and not faced with the advertiser which have plagued him in less ambitious features.

The script in this instance is especially well-constructed, detailing a series of increasingly grisly murders which follow the several courses visited upon the Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt by God. The direction, by Robert Fuest, charts a course which manages, for such of a length, to keep its balance while walking the tightrope known as "Cotton." The castings, and Joseph Cotton, Terry-Thomas and Peter Jeffrey, contribute competent performances. In addition, the film is blessed with period sets and costumes which recall the past with the kind of fond exaggeration best typified by a puffy Cecil Beaton hat. And the editing itself it should be.

THE (and please put that in caps, Mr. Printer) Vincent Price, as Dr. Anton Phibes, holds the whole shebang together--the vital thread which keeps an expensive suit from falling apart.

To say that Price is at his best in a show part such as this one is perhaps doing a disservice to an actor who turned in his finest dramatic performance as the evil-willed Sheriff Corcoran in **OUT OF FRESH AIR** (1944) and his most memorable comedy performance as the sharp-shooting ham actor in John Farrow's **HIS KIND OF WOMAN** (1951). But in recent years, especially in his long string of Roger Corman movies, Price has developed a suave sardonic style that has stood him in good stead even when the material deserts him. Possibly the key to his success in the horror cycle lies in his refusal to look down on his parts; thus one can understand something which sounds as unpromising as the Italian job called **THE LAST MAN ON EARTH** receives the same sound performance which later adorns a more notable effort, such as **THE MASQUE OF RED DEATH**.

In **DR. PHIBBS**, Price is a former vaudeville star who is forcibly digested in an accident, and later goes mad when his injured wife cannot be cured by a team of English doctors in the operating room. Filled with hate and preeeeling the mad genius to dispose of his enemies in the most bizarre manner imaginable, Phibes begins a reign of terror which makes use of the corpses from the Old Testament. (Sample course: at a costume party, one of the doomed doctors is outfitted with a frog's head mask which strangles him to death. And, believe it or not, the course involving rats is even more bloody than a similar sequence in **WILLARD**).

Against some stunning backdrops reminiscent of the Thirties, with appropriate razz-matraz music supplied by the mechanical "Clockwork Wizards," the bad doctor plays his evil while the last doctor on the death list (the same and sensible Joseph Cotton) awaits his turn.

Regrettably, toward the end, the fruity style which has generated enough chuckles to take the course! (off of Phibes' racistist surprises begins to shortcircuit with a repulsive segment devoted to the disposal of a nurse by flesh-eating locusts. And the sight of Cotton opening to open his young son's chest to retrieve the key which will free the boy from an insane acid

The review for a film which has slanted its screenplay in a direction which is...
 Furthermore, the sight of "rice-as-white" playing his parts on a "the" "summer or" "sipping" champagne through the tiny tube in his ear is reason enough for him to be to "leave" their "with" this "arch" friend.
 "The" "any" "therefore" will "even" be "chance" to "discover" that "American" "international" is "scheduling" a "sequel" THE "USA" "of" "the" "1977".
 In the meantime, we shall just have to "live" the urge to "avoid" "the" "Vietnam" "tells" "him" "reading" "I" "don't" "do".

Editor's note: the sequel to THE APOCALYPSE NOW. FRIBBS is entitled DR. FRIBBS RISES AGAIN, and it stars Vincent Price, Peter Cushing and Robert "Count Yorga" Quarry. Robert Fuest is the director. Film is borned last year in 1976. It has been confirmed for release in 1977 this year.

Dale Winthrop:

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES A 20th Century Fox Picture Released in 1971. In Panavision and Color by DeLuxe. 98 minutes running time. AFJAC Production. Produced by Arthur F. Jacobs. Directed by Don Taylor. Written by Paul Dehn based on the characters created by Pierre Boulle. Associate Producer, Frank Capra, Jr., Director of photography, Joseph Biroc. ASC. Music composed by Jerry Goldsmith. Film editor, Marion Rothman. Creative Advisor, John Chamberlain. Executive Producer, Francisco Day. Assistant director, Popi Lenzi. Special photographic effects, Howard A. Anderson. Co-art directors, Jack Smith and William Kreiser. Set decorators, Walter M. Scott and Stuart M. Reiss. Make-up supervision, Dan Strupka. Make-up artist, Jack Barron. Cost. Rodney McDowell (Cornelius), Mia Hunter (Eira), Eric Braeden (Dr. Otto Hasslein), Bradford Dillman (Dr. Lewis Dixon), Metelle Trundy (Stephanie Branton), William Windom (the president), Sal Mineo (Milo).

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES is a genuinely pleasing surprise. Much better than the mediocre predecessor, or, BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES, this film comes fairly close to the exceptional quality of the original.

There is nothing aesthetically complex or demanding about the film. It's simply a brisk, intriguing action and suspense film. But it has a superficial vacuum of story as this may make it seem.

Writer Paul Dehn fabricated a tight, methodical script, with sharp and intriguingly detailed scientific and technical exposition. But even more notable is the humor, and director Don Taylor handles it effectively simply methods of conveying it to the viewer.

The idea of three of the ape-people arriving in the present by the late commander Taylor's own spaceship, including Fira, Cornelius, and a scientist named Milo, has been almost thoroughly used by Dehn. His development never dries up, and even when Fira must escape with her husband and new-born child, even then Dehn's taste and narrative drive never falters. The suspense, inseparable threat to their lives is made terrifyingly real and one's empathy with them is never felt.

Though Don Taylor has little of the strength of cinematic personality and intensity of Franklin J. Schaffner in his handling of PLANET OF THE APES, he is still definitely superior to Ted Post's boringly loose, unconvincing handling of science and editing, especially with the humor, pointless trucking about the over-exposition of scenes everywhere. Taylor's methods are not really personal, but they're at very least clear, clean, precise and always functional in terms of developing and enhancing the many aspects of the screenplay.

Performance are mostly good. The excellent Eric Braeden as a cool-villain, but whose arguments for the destruction of the apes make a curious kind of sense. Braeden is one of the best actors working today, his recent performances mostly relegated to tv character roles and brilliant, complex portrayals of Dr. Richard Kimble in Joseph L. Sarrent's masterful COLOSSUS, THE FORBIDDEN FRONTIER. He is natural, seemingly effortless, restrained, and intensely underplayed style is immediately persuasive and commanding, and he fits each role with truly professional ease and control.

Braeden is amusing, and properly confused and concerned as the doctor who helps the ape-people, and Mia Hunter and Rodney McDowell are back into the firmness of characterization that they were in the first one. The film utilizes Panavision ratio colorfully and with evident competition. Camera and all other over-exposures are carried through with finesse and not a trace of rush or carelessness in spite of the low budget and fast shooting schedule.

A true sleeper of 1971. ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES is unfortunately not receiving the public attention

on of the last two. The last one probably turned off the followers of the original, and the annoyingly obvious title scares everybody else away. An entertaining and as well-made as it is, this film will probably remain one of the saddest casualties of 20th Century-Fox this year.

WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH A Warner Brothers Film. A Hammer Film Production. In Technicolor. Running Time: 96 minutes. Produced by Aldo Young. Directed by Val Guest, from a screen treatment by J.B. Halliwell. Director of photography, Dick Bush. Art director, John Blesard. Editor, Peter Curen. Special effects by Allan Bryce, Roger Dicken and Brian Johnson. Sound recordist, Kevin Sutton. Special Visual Effects created by Jim Danforth. Music and special musical effects by Mari Macdonald. Medical advisor, Phillip Maxwell. Production manager, Chris Sutton. Costume designer, Carl Toot. 2nd unit costar, Johnny Cabers. 2nd unit continuity, Susanna Merry. Make-up supervisor, Joyce James. Wardrobe master, Brian Owen-Smith. Assistant director, John Stoneham. Only Jim Danforth's perfected animation techniques salvage Val Guest's unbelievably sloppy WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH. His directorial and editing tempo is so confused, stilted and annoyingly obtuse that it's impossible to focus on the action at all, with or without Victoria Vetri's glamorous endowments and uncertain acting ability. But Danforth's work is smooth, energetic, and generally fun to watch. The film is not as tedious sometimes bearable, but not totally forgivable.

Even Don Chaffey showed clearer and more interesting delineation of story and character in ONE MILLION YEARS, B.C. and CREATURES THE WORLD FORGOT. For all their flaws, they were much better films than this slovenly, tired, and lumbering prehistoric epic.

SIMON, KING OF THE WITCHES A Pandora Film, released in 1971. Metrocolor. Running time: 89 minutes. Executive Producer, Joe Solomon. Producer, David Hammond. Directed by Roger Kessler. Scripted by Robert Shippney. Director of photography, George East. Cost. Andrew Prince (Simon), Brenda Scott (Linda), George Paulson (Karl), Norman Burton (Baculus), Gerald York (Hercules), Ulfar Vild (Sigmund), Michael (Richard), Lee Lambert, Angus Duncan, Richmond Shepard, Allyson Ames. Roger Kessler proved himself a director of obviously despicable talent and taste in his SIMON, KING OF THE WITCHES. The beginning is noted as it follows a modern-day warlock through various personal struggles with "the gods" and at these moments are grains of salt in the mud when cheap "camp" style and hip quality with all the sex, language, and pot-smoking that may make it perversely appealing in the post-movie way for some people. It's pathetic attempts at comedy with a camp sensibility, sexual innuendo, and sexual innuendo. It's very complete with old women wiggling their bottoms. Is just too indicative of Kessler's content either for the medium, his audience, or himself.

Kessler, and writer Robert Shippney, cannot give any flair or feeling for anything or anybody, and their lack of discrimination and control on the medium is so obvious that it offers a probable new low for aesthetic in the supernatural genre. Visually, this is also one of the ugliest and dullest films of its kind yet made. Shabby imagery seems to be a vogue these days, mostly used for the wrong reasons, and it's only in films like GUN WINKING WALK or THE INVINCIBLE are made that one realizes the importance of evocative visual power by the very impact of these two, virtually unrelaxed masterpieces of their kind.

Kind Simon, KING OF THE WITCHES, dull, annoying, unconvincing, and inept. In spite of Andrew Prince's occasionally sharp-witted and poignant performance of Simon, But, because its such a strange amalgamation of trips, it might have a perverse following, like PERFORMANCE and MYRA BRECKINRIDGE.

THE DEVILS. Ken Russell's powerful, bizarre, nightmarish masterpiece, revealing the sexual and violent nature of the impact of the film is so devastating, with the gutsy intensity of Oliver Reed to match, that one will either love it to distraction, or hate it beyond reason, with CHOKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY. Wonderful fantasy fun to be enjoyed by everybody. Gene Wilder's quiet miracle as usual. Mel Stuart's direction is graceful and just right, and the spirit of the whole thing is just irrefutable. THE MELASTROM CHRONICLE. Not a fact and fiction fuse in a visually stunning and overwhelming film, but it's a cold, dry, dead colorless story of the things that are, and it's absolutely beautiful in depicting the marvels and horrors of the insect kingdom.

PETER RABBIT AND TALES OF BEATRIX POTTER. For ballet and specialists only, this is good in its own way. But it will be a waste and a waste of time if it does not respond to the simple charm and delicacy of Beatrix Potter's quite remarkable usage of color, camera, and dancers.

LIGHT AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD Jules Verne's last novel was this camp adventure story about a battle over a lighthouse on

ween two men. It's good, fast, violent nonsense on film, with an effective use of Panavision, carefully flamboyant performances by Kirk Douglas and Val Brynner, and sometimes amazingly obvious falling dummies and misfires.

THE REINCARNATE. Better-than-average supernatural film with a few good, intense touches by its director. It possesses strong directorial intelligence in spite of its patently pretentious, over-promo script, and the erotic qualities are tasteful and nicely handled.

THE WEGGA WAR. Richard Matheson's *J Am Legend* has been utilized as a thin in-house-made flat, strangely unimaginative film. It's good at first when Charlton Heston (who's excellent as always) is alone and trying to exist for himself, but all the gross, idiotic pretensions come out when more people enter the scene and start spouting religious, philosophical, sociological, and moral cant. It's an unfortunate waste of time as a film and science-fiction, and a major disappointment.

—Ike Naginura

Jerry Weddle (To Editor)

THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD. An Amicus Production, released in 1971, in Eastmancolor. Directed by Rank Film Laboratories. Rated G. Filmed at Shepperton Studios, Middlesex, England. Released in the U.S. by Cinema Release Corporation. Executive Producer: Paul Ellsworth and Gordon Wasserman. Produced by Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Directed by Peter Duffell. Story by Robert Bloch and based on his short stories. Director of Photography, Ray Parlow. Executive Director, Tony Curtis. Music composed and conducted by Michael Drews. Production Manager, Terence Hall. Edited by John Turner. Assistant director, Peter Seale. Camera Operator, Gerry Lawrence. Wardrobe Supervisor, Laure Staffell. Make-up by Harry A. Peter. Franchon. Continuity by Fayella Townsend. Sound by Ken Ritchie. Set Designer, Fred Carter. Dubbing Mixer, Michael Reardon. Dubbing editor, Nolan Roberts.

Casting: Christopher Lee (John Reid), John Gilling (Philip Grayson), Jon Pertwee (Paul Henderson), Denholm Elliott (Inspector Killard), Ingrid Pitt (Carole), Bryan Dawn Porter (Ann Lawton), Joanna Dunham (Alice Millard), Chloë Franks (Jane Reid), Kenneth C. Brown (Detective Inspector Holloway), John Byrne (A.J. Stoker), Tom Adams (Dominick/Charles), Jose Ackland (Neville Rogers), Wolfe Morris (Jacqueline), the waxwork proprietor, Geoffrey Gordon (Herman), Robert Lang (Dr. Andrews), John Malone (Police Sergeant Martin).

Amicus Productions have been producing many excellent horror films the past decade, easily putting Hammer and AIP to shame. Some of their best films are *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* and *THE MIND OF MR. SOAMES*, but my favorite of all their films have all come from the pen of Robert Bloch. Amicus first adapted his short story, *The Skull of Margalo de Sade*, *THE SKULL* (directed by Freddie Francis, starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing) in 1964, and then contracted him to write screenplays adapted from his own short stories. The first of these was *THE PSYCHO-PATH* (directed by Francis, starring Patrick Wymark, Margaret Johnston, and Alexander Knox) in 1966, and next *TORTURE GARDEN* (also directed by Francis with Cushing, George Marston, and Jack Palance) in 1968, and Bloch is currently writing the scenario of *THE ARMYLON* for release later this year. But Bloch's, and Amicus's, finest achievement to date is *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD*, one of the most imaginative and entertaining fant-

asies to come along in quite a while.

Released in March last year, *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* is a horror movie for people who hate horror movies—it is a decent, pleasant bit of fun and fright, which is really all it attempts to be. For example, despite the explicit title, not one tenth of blood, gore, or violence is visible throughout the entire picture. Some of the most established critics—Judith Christ, Donald J. Mayerson and Pauline Kael—have written very enthusiastic reviews on the film, and their favorable comments can best support that statement. And in horror film reviews such favorable reviews from the critics who usually avoid the genre like the plague, then it must be a job well done.

It is true that Bloch's script is, on the surface, a rathering of monster-flick clichés. This may mean the film's final effectiveness for a major part of its audience, but for those who don't demand special originality or perfection it will undoubtedly prove to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. If you do look below the surface and see the true feeling of the picture, how Robert Bloch is a master-craftsman; he knows what he's doing when he's doing it, and so his clichéd script does have a purpose and a reason for being what it is. And not only that, but Bloch has never written a film with so much depth or diversity, or with such sincere appreciation for the genre.

Like *TORTURE GARDEN* and *THE ARMYLON*, *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* is an anthology of four horror vignettes, each one illustrating a different aspect of the supernatural and terror, and held together by the unique framework of an inspector who is told the stories by two men while investigating the disappearance of the last tenant, Police Sergeant Malone tells Detective Holloway (John Byrne) the stories of blood, death, and terror. While real-estate dealer A.J. Stoker (John Byrne) tells him of "The Clock" and "Sweetie to the Sweet." The first three stories have somewhat predictable conclusions (I hate to give them away), but the fourth, "The House That Drifted Blood," is so scary that you may enjoy myself instead of trying to think up the probable climax; they took as by surprise.

The first story is one of those psychological thrillers that Bloch does so well. "The House That Drifted Blood" is narrated by Charles Millard, a writer of horror stories who comes to the house with his wife Alice (Joanna Dunham), for its strange atmosphere to inspire him in the writing of his new novel. The book is about Dominick (Tom Adams), a deranged stranger who, in Alice's own words, "...is a real piece of work." He is searching for fresh victims, laughing maniacally as he kills them; Charles becomes so absorbed in writing about Dominick that he actually comes to believe he is being haunted by his "creation." There are many chilling scenes of Dominick's mad behavior when his image only reflects in the mirror, when he peers through windows and laughs demonically from shadowy corners. Let the reader take it from there, and let us see if you guess the ending. "The House That Drifted Blood" is a masterpiece. A retired stockbroker who comes to the secluded house to enjoy his hobbies of listening to music, reading books, and gardening. He meets an old rival, Neville Rogers (Jose Ackland) together they visit a wax museum in his village. Philip (Neville Rogers) and Alice (Joanna Dunham) find out that there again he will be the next victim. With the haunting wax figure of Salome as he himself had been. But Neville is unable to resist the temptation of going there again, and when he mysteriously disappears Philip discovers his head resting on Salome's tray. The Wax Museum's proprietor, Jacqueline (Wolfe Morris) tells Philip that this wax doll is really his unborn wife, whom he killed because she no longer loved him, and... There is a scurrying through these first two stories, psychological terror—Charles thinking he is insane, then becomes obsessed with Dominick, Philip and Neville becoming infatuated with Salome and losing their heads to a madman, a psychic killer and a quick psychiatrist. And it should be obvious to those people who are familiar with the character of Charles Millard, in the character of Charles Millard, and in the last two stories he personifies others and incorporates his own sense of humor.

"Sweetie to the Sweet" is a presentation of "The Clown at Midnight" theory of Robert Bloch. It is a story of a man, Charles, who is a real wax figure. Jane Reid, an innocent, sweet little girl who is really a voodoo witch, John Reid (Christopher Lee) is her father and he brings her to the house to keep her away from normal people. He hires a doctor who he thinks is a psychiatrist, a doctor of H.C.T.V.'s "Foretold Saga" sequel of *MASTERPIECE THEATRE* watch over his daughter, but Ann is unaware of what Jane really is until Mr. Reid begins having pains in his chest caused by the girl. He dies, and then she throws the wax figure into the fireplace and we hear Mr. Reid's off-screen as he dies.

"The Clock" is such an inspiring, brilliantly conceived story that it is hard to believe it will be the last of the series. It is a mean old actor who has been making horror films all his life and he rents the old house because it is located close to the studio (Shepperton Studios, where this film was actually produced) of his new horror series. *CURSE OF THE BLOODGIRLS*.

"A PARALYZINGLY SCARY FILM."

—Richard Mayerson, Cine Magazine



THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD Christopher Lee Peter Cushing

Directed by Freddie Francis. Screenplay by Robert Bloch. Produced by Rank Film Laboratories. Rated G.

Starring: Christopher Lee, John Gilling, Jon Pertwee, Denholm Elliott, Ingrid Pitt, Bryan Dawn Porter, Joanna Dunham, Kenneth C. Brown, John Byrne, Tom Adams, Jose Ackland, Wolfe Morris, Geoffrey Gordon, Robert Lang, John Malone.

Amicus Productions have been producing many excellent horror films the past decade, easily putting Hammer and AIP to shame.

Some of their best films are *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* and *THE MIND OF MR. SOAMES*, but my favorite of all their films have all come from the pen of Robert Bloch.

Amicus first adapted his short story, *The Skull of Margalo de Sade*, *THE SKULL* (directed by Freddie Francis, starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing) in 1964, and then contracted him to write screenplays adapted from his own short stories.

The first of these was *THE PSYCHO-PATH* (directed by Francis, starring Patrick Wymark, Margaret Johnston, and Alexander Knox) in 1966, and next *TORTURE GARDEN* (also directed by Francis with Cushing, George Marston, and Jack Palance) in 1968, and Bloch is currently writing the scenario of *THE ARMYLON* for release later this year.

But Bloch's, and Amicus's, finest achievement to date is *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD*, one of the most imaginative and entertaining fant-

Paul is disgusted over the way his crew is producing the film what with the inexperienced director, low budget, and incoherent script. He finds a strange card with the name of an antique shop on it; he leaves the shop and buys an old cape once worn by a real Transylvanian vampire from Theo Von Hartman (Rums Krenyan), a peculiar old man who runs the shop. The next day, he goes to the studio with the cape and wears it in the vampire-slaying scene. But something comes over him, and he really does bite co-star Carla Lind (Ingrid Pitt). To apologize for embarrassing her, Paul invites Carla to dinner at his house. He tells her why he bit her—that the cloak came from Von Hartman's wife and that she is bloodsuckers who whoever wears it, Carla dons the cape when the clock strikes twelve and floats in the air to the balcony where Paul is hiding, and says, "We loved your film so much we wanted you to be the one of us. Welcome to the club!"

The Clock's message is so disturbing about all the flaws in the current horror trend, in one sentence Bloch sums up what is wrong with the industry, while angrily smashing with his cane the paper-mache castle setting. Paul Henderson says "You what's wrong with your current day horror films—there is no realism! Not like the old ones, now, the great ones... PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA—the one with Bela Lugosi of course, not that new fellow. They didn't have freshly painted scenery! Look at this, just look at it! So films are so much more realistic than the new ones, and you use it for draperies!" Bloch also pays a respectful homage to Bela Lugosi in the form of the vampire, and even more homage to Boris Karloff in the form of an aging actor who has been making horror films, whether they be of good or poor quality, all his life.

Bloch demonstrates his flair for comedy as he has never done so before. It is hilarious watching Dominick cuss up bawd and Charlie's psychiatrist and struggle like right there while the two characters Charlie and the psychiatrist are in a room. The one has been having, and then there is the bulbous-nosed, cross-eyed vampire, his ears wax one way and nose flops the other, his face is funny but the make-up on him is scary. And the climax of "The Clock" is a tour-de-force that will have you rolling in the aisles.

The final climax has Inspector Holloway exploring the house in the dead of night, and in the most chilling, atmospheric scene of the film, Holloway finds the two coffins of Paul and Carla in the basement. The rise of the clock on the coffin at the stroke of twelve to claim a new victim.

The cast is outstanding. Peter Cushing is superb, and he turns in the film's finest performance, but he is overshadowed by Dan Curtis who does his best with his role/colorful character. Christopher Lee, in a less than demanding role, Myra Dawn Porter, Ingrid Pitt, Denholm Elliott are all quite excellent and Chloe Franks (she appeared in TRU) is a very charming actress.

Director Peter Duffell does a commendable job, his is a very sincere attempt and I hope Amicus will assign him to handle more of their films in the future. Photographer Jay Parvelli neatly captures a spooky atmosphere by the use of faded colors, muted, soft light, soft focus, and various shades of green. The photography and direction combined with the lighting establish an outstanding style in the museum sequences of "Mavericks," and the flowers themselves are strikingly greater than life. Credits Harry and Peter Frampton. There is also some very stylish, effective music composed by Michael Brown.

Amicus Productions almost stand now where Hammer stood in the 1950's of the early '60's, and if they continue on the same track they will easily surpass the Hammer Studios. As Judith Christie said about THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD, "It's a joy to know that they're still makin' 'em this way!"

NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer 1971. A Dan Curtis Production. Produced and Directed by Dan Curtis. Screenplay by Sam Hall from a story by Dan Curtis. Art direction by Trevor Williams. Director of Photography, Arthur Omitz. Music composed and conducted by Robert Cobert. Special Technical advisor, Hans Moller. Cost Designer, David Selby (David Selby-Collins), Grayson Hall (Carolina Drake), Lara Parker (Angelique), Kate Jackson (Tracey Collins), John Erlean (Alex Jenkins), Nancy Barrett (Claire Jenkins), Thayer David (Pseudonym Christopher Pennock, Bob Wenders (The Devil). This further alining of Dan Curtis's ABC-TV series DARK SHADOWS makes its second big screen appearance, and a good one at that. While Dan Curtis is quite a remarkable producer/director in the film business, he is also a director. In one way or another, usually due to a weak screenplay when it is not the other way around, could have been superior to the majority of feature films currently being released by major studios. Such was the case with his first motion picture, HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS, which was not nearly as good as his TV series. THE DEVIL IN THE SHIRT OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE and Richard Matheson's THE NIGHT STALKER. The latter film was so successful on TV it will soon be released to theaters, and Curtis is now working on

a major motion picture for MGM, again DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE to star Sir Laurence Olivier and James Mason.

In conclusion to HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS, the first DARK SHADOWS film has been a judiciously unappealing script ever written for a motion picture, but for this equal the screenplay written by Curtis and Sam Hall is almost first-rate in my opinion. The concept—soap opera in a supernatural and Gothic style—was so carefully developed (Hammer's John Elder could learn from that!) and the theme is coherent and interesting. In particular, Curtis and Hall do an admirable job on character development and premise, and even the setting (grave, ancient old mansion overrun by spooky-acts, and a character and a director who are not the best) of the film is essentially slow, and its only flaw lies in the fact that, with the exception of the last 25 minutes or so, the film moves at such an aggravating, dull pace it becomes an over-long, boring, and unappealing experience. The film's weaknesses to this stagnation, and as a result the entire affair becomes a trifle pretentious. It is also dead serious, to much so, some humor or satire is sorely needed to liven (not the ghosts, just the people) things up a bit. In fact, I am sure that if Maser had been incorporated the slow pace would not have been noticeable, meaning that NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS could have been perfect. Everything about the film is natural and creative, like the dialogue, and the conventional script resembles THE RETURN OF THE COUCH POTATO.

Quentin Collins (David Selby) arrives at the old Collingwood mansion with his bride, Tracey (Kate Jackson), where they are greeted by their new tenants, Alex and his wife Claire Jenkins (John Erlean and Nancy Barrett). Quentin is an artist, and he sets to work painting in the strange lower room he is haunted by illusions of the dead witch, Angelique (Lara Parker) who was hanged in the 18th century. The housekeeper, Carolina Drake (Grayson Hall) and her wicked nephew, Gerard (James St. John) are also present. Quentin is a very handsome man, and the characters Collins take over Quentin's body. Gradually, Quentin's personality becomes more and more like that of his dead ancestor, he tries to drown Tracey and it is his love for the witch that keeps her alive. But Alex and Claire discover what is happening, and they try to save their friends.

In the flashback sequences to the 18th century, we learn that Angelique was in love with Charles, but she was condemned to death by her real husband (Christopher Pennock), Charles' brother (David Selby) who was the devil himself (Dr. Frank or David) against Charles' will. In short, all are reincarnations of their turbulent past and the dead come to call on the living.

David Selby delivers a very well-drawn characterization in the dual, difficult role of Charles/Quentin Collins, and Grayson Hall, who won the 1964 Oscar for best supporting actress in NIGHT OF THE IGUANA, is equally good as the sinister maid who knows all the secrets of the old mansion. John Erlean (who appeared in the Belgian vampire film, DAUGHTERS OF THE MOON) and Nancy Barrett are both quite good as the novelist team who try to save their friends, and Kate Jackson gives a fine, earnest performance as Quentin's mistreated bride; she cries a lot, and has a great scene in the red room. The only flaw in Thayer David who has three other screen credits to his name, all performed adequately. The underlined actors appeared in HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS as well.

Produced and directed in Tarrytown, New York, used for Collingwood, was restored by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer just for this film (in HOUSE it looked dilapidated and shabby, which it was at the time). The interiors are extraordinarily designed, the rooms are elaborately furnished with a lavish, beautiful style that contributes a great deal of quality to the film. The house itself is deliciously spooky-looking, with all the lurking shadows, ghostly windows, imposing towers, creeping doors, etc.

Holzer, the celebrated ghost hunter, was technical advisor on the film, so one might say that it is "parapsychologically accurate" in the nerve-wracking scenes where the dead take over the living's bodies.

Produced and directed by Robert Cobert is not worth discussing. The music director, Dan Curtis does nothing by the rules; he is a masterful director, and unquestionably as remarkable a director as Terence Fisher and Freddie Francis. Curtis is a competent to the genre, and like the best of them he has his own style. Technique and ideas, and he uses them with a keen sense of know-how and discernability. Let's hope that someday he will choose a script as good as his talents, for there is no telling what he can accomplish with good material. NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS is a damned good movie, one of last year's best. Best for those who like the soap opera. If you are silly, you must admit that it is much more original than Hammer's boy-saves-girl-from-monster stories, and on an equal level with the Count Dracula films.

In Memoriam.
Jonathan Frid and Joan Bennett
Created by Dan Curtis,
ABC-Television,
June 1966 - June 1971

MURDERERS IN THE FIVE MURDERE is not only one of American-International's most prestigious productions, but one of their worst as well. The subtitler Harbet Los asks ravages on Jason Hobard and his acting company for the horrible accident that happened to him long ago. The first 45 minutes are inept, but it gets better in the last half hour as the director, Harbet Los and Christopher Wicking is contrived, pretentious, and boring, being a reworking of the last PHANTOM OF THE OPERA films with some details of Edgar Allan Poe's story thrown into the stew. The cast deserves a medal for the acting, but the director can't take it seriously, and neither can the audience. Harbet Los is superb, he always is, repeating the role he did so well in Hammer's 1962 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. Director Gordon Heals also enjoys the film, completing the second-class blood-fest (and a half dozen other people getting their faces burned too) of the villain in the opening sequence (I) he ruins the suspense--there is none. Some horror movie, it could and should have been better.

THIS INCKRETELE 2-HEADS! TRANSPARENT is incredible alright, and for such a bad movie it is rather good. Bruce Dern, an otherwise good actor, is the wall-walking scientist who greets the scientific Spahnash based on the shoulders of the alien John Bloom, and the two witwits fight each other over heretics Pri Priest. Robert Fuller is the hero, if you don't know what to make of this review wait until you see the film.

THE CAT IN THE HAT is a film that is a disaster and no confidence in himself. He's got a real mean boss and an aggravating mother, both of whom think he's a total failure as a human being. So Willard trains rats, Sen and Secretes and their few other friends, and uses them to fulfill his desire. He's cheating up his boss and swiping the money to pay the rent. Ernest Borgnine is a villain worth hating, it is good to see him Lancaster back on the screen again, and Bruce Davison is a villain worth hating. Willard, although not a villain, is a stage his. WILLARD is a good suspense film, it makes wonderful entertainment even though it's full of holes, rat holes, a great deal of suspense and chills are lessened by welcome comedy remarks. Ernest Borgnine, who has already completed filming, and it should not be made!

THE CAT O'NINE TAILS is another one of those Italian thriller-shockers in the PSYCHO vein. It is often horrifying beyond words, but that commendable achievement is marred by the ravely, inept director, who doesn't know what he's doing. There are more killings than you can count, James Franciscus is a reporter who knows blind ex-reporter Karl Malden solve the grisly murders at a research institute. There are too many deaths, and the director is a disaster. THE CAT O'NINE TAILS THE CRISTAL PIRAMIDE it is a why-did-they-make-it rather than a whodunit.

YOU-THE MONSTER FROM SPACE Now that we've landed on the Moon, we humans should be above this sort of thing. The film is very colorful and the production is well mounted, but that's all there is to it. A lot of Jews run around screaming in the story about a group of scientists who discover an island volcano an all the while get jobs. The film is a disaster, and the director the Jap monster theme rolled into one place of contrived nonsense that the kiddies will enjoy.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SATAN is a surprisingly good film, one of the best realizations of the idea of a independent production fund. L.Q. Jones is an awful director, he concentrates the action in one corner of the screen instead of centering it, but as a screenplay writer he is really quite good. Strother Martin, produced by L.Q. Jones, is a disaster, and he takes over the residents of a secluded California town: a boy tank prowls the streets and suddenly grows into a real tank that pulverizes any person or vehicle that gets out of line. L.Q. Jones wrote, produced, directed, and acted in the film, and he is to be congratulated on his sincere effort and appreciation for the genre.

SIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD is not worth the celluloid it's printed and is one of the worst. The film should never have been made. The film is so morbid and repulsive that anyone who actually enjoys watching it is sick in the head and in need of mental help. Made for \$17 hundred it has grossed over \$17 million, being a real success. The film is a disaster, and the director L.Q. Jones made these past four years. Constant technical work and sincere acting cannot make up for the abhorrent, disgusting, indescribable, unbelievable gore. People are burned, butchered, and the director is a disaster, and the film is a disaster. The film is nauseated to oblivion in blood that pours out of the screen and flows down the aisles. As Gus Maguire so wily put it, "wait until you're dead to see it."

WHILE THE DEAD ARE ALIVE is a disaster, and the William Wyler masterpiece of 1946. The cinematography is appropriately dark and moody, the scenery of Forkshire and the moors is splendid, the music is lovely, and Robert Fawcett's directing is beautifully atmospheric and styled. Heathcliff, as Catherine, is most beautifully played by an unimpaired performance by a lovely Dorothy Dand and Ann Calder-Marshall. The film may not be up to the original Oliver/Oberon classic, but it is a worthy remake and sticks closely to Emily Brontë's novel. The story of Heathcliff, Catherine and how he takes a supernatural vengeance to fully bring them together. The sequel has already been filmed.

TEX-1138 is a minor masterpiece of science-fiction and an almost brilliant study on the problems of society. George Lucas is such an ambitious, discernible filmmaker he may yet turn in to another Stanley Kubrick. His ideas of today's society--as evidenced here--what it is, was, could and should be are convincing and well integrated. He is a filmmaker who is not just the film's filmmaker's work today. Like 2001, TEX-1138 is an allegorical trip into the future of man's destiny, the film is a social commentary in the provocative form of science-fiction. The film is a masterpiece, and it is a masterpiece in the way it thinks and behaves individually when he is corrupted by women who loves him, and it tells the story of how he tries to escape the stifled society and into the outside world. The film is a masterpiece, and it is a masterpiece in the way it thinks and behaves individually when he is corrupted by women who loves him, and it tells the story of how he tries to escape the stifled society and into the outside world. The film is a masterpiece, and it is a masterpiece in the way it thinks and behaves individually when he is corrupted by women who loves him, and it tells the story of how he tries to escape the stifled society and into the outside world.

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Any editors who want a free plug for their publication in this department must send their magazines to Dave Suresk and he'll review it in the next issue of Thriller. If you wish to have the review returned (original), please be sure to enclose a sufficiently sized/stamped envelope. Dave's address is:

Dave Suresk
Associate Editor, Thriller
c/o 6320 Perkins Street
Detroit, Mich 48221

Scarlett Serran-2 (Michael Serran/2056 Coyle Street/Brooklyn New York 11229, 16 pages--50¢--serial offset) This isn't exactly the best thing I've ever seen, but it's not bad either. Frank Serran reviews SEAS OF THE WILLOW and also QUARANTINE WITH THE TWIN NANO, Mike does his thing on TALIS FROM THE CRIT and also gives us a potentially good but rather mediocre bit of sci-fi. He further goes on with a critical commentary complaining about the current horror films and horror magazines and also remains loyal to the original printed source, I review MONSTER A 90-00 and THE VAMPYR'S COFFIN, and our old buddy Bob Comorosky reviews THE MONSTER THINGS. There is an overly brief lettercolumn, two editorials that don't say much, and fair artwork by Don Greene, Darlene Marlowe, and Steve Serran. A fair Fanzine.

Fantasy Revolution! (Jim Kennedy/1159 East Fairfield/Wasa, Arizona 85201, 56 pages--46¢) It's always nice to see a first issue that has it's stuff halfway together, and Jim has done just that. I also like Jim's attitude. Note lines come from the fanmail column of harping on about how terrible current films are, and just how marvelous the old ones were. Furthermore, he has some rather innovative ideas, explaining how certain, seeming unrelated films are actually, and writing articles on the science of horror and fantasy. The greatest portion of it's made up of numerous film reviews. There are editorial comments, short fiction by Arminis Vrebe, poems by Marie Warfield, two articles on amateur filmmaking, Harry Morris on H.P. Lovecraft, and a transcript of a Johnny Carson interview with John Carpenter. Film news that is varied and interesting. For a first issue, this is good, and I can just imagine it's future.

Varchugev-1 (John Cowdin and Gary Gray/520 Orange Street/Wilmington, North Carolina, 28401, 16 pages--25¢--offset cover). This is a really a rap, and it's not much to talk about current-wise. Jedediah writes about his life in and out of fandom. Crady's main topic is the upcoming SEMI (including the films proposed for that con). Two pieces of poetry. No award winner, but rather interesting.

Monstrous Magazine-2 (P.O. Box 34303/Dallas, Texas 75234, 32 pages--46¢ issues for \$2) MM is becoming less and less of an e-zine. Articles are relatively plentiful this time. Steve Utley writes about dinosaur movies, Steve Pulvert on amateur filmmaking, Frank Martin begins a Hollywood gossip column, and there are quite a few top reviews. There's also a lettercol. Ads are interesting, too.

Core Creatures-20 (Gary J. Svehla/5906 Kaxon Avenue/ Baltimore, Maryland 21206, 90 pages--50¢--offset). Another fine issue of one of the best fanzines around. The offset is great, the interior art is the best available, and the cover (by Dave Ludwig) is one of the best I've seen anywhere. But the finest asset is, of course, the informal, personalized atmosphere, always present in Gary's mag and often rare in monsterzines. Lead article is Scott MacQuinn's piece on availability on the screen. Accompanying art includes some very humorous cartoons by Ludwig, proving that Ludwig may be better as a cartoonist than as a serious artist. Svehla does a thoughtful and quite readable piece on humor in horror film, and David Soren's column reviews CLAY OF THE MICHIGAN, NIGHT OF THE SCORCH, and THE KILLER LACKS A NAME, while Lon Talbot defends UNDUN. BUREAU DIXON raps about spacehips on the screen, there are filmreviews, fanzine reviews, and Lon Okey's favorite jokes. An interesting editorial and lettercol. Ohhh, if only MM could be half the mag...!!!

Evangelus-5 (Harry Morris, Jr./500 Walleaby S.E./Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106, 60 pages--35¢--offset). Lovecraft freaks, rejoice!!! Morris and Company have once again rotten together a fine issue of the mag that I feel can be enjoyed even by those who are not into Lovecraft is limited. The serie cover by Harry Morris and Steve Piley conveys the serie mood of The Hunter, Robert Weinberg's article H.P. Lovecraft and Pseudoscientific fiction challenges the scientific credibility of Lovecraftian fiction. The piece is well-written but, I think, a little unnecessary. But plotting. Don Shandosh criticizes "The Shadow Out of Time" Eddy C. Berlin raps about "Cthulu Mythos" other than Lovecraft himself, thereby covering well-known people like August Derleth, Robert Bloch, Clark Smith, etc. A poetry section shows of Bertin, George Lattin, John Bredes, and myself. John Jacob is represented in an interesting fiction story. Ed Benglund reports on the far from publication of Howard Phillips Lovecraft--some of the charras are quite interesting.

I think Ron Bost's Exploring Bare Fantasy On the Screen, 1930-45 is a valuable and important writing that should be of interest to all fantasy film fans, as it gives important info on fantasy film history. Ron worked real hard on it for Thriller and I'd like to thank him here for it and for the stilling well as to illustrate it. A Retrospective of the Horror Film of Lawrence Fisher in Jan Van Cammenet's first major article for a fanzine and I think he's a darn good writer, one of fandom's very best. While Jan's article is excellent, I disagree with many of his opinions and comments on Fisher and his films. And I know, too, that readers will probably disagree as I do about Fisher, but that is because this is a very controversial subject and if anyone out there would like to discuss their feelings about it, write us a loc and we'll run the arguments in the second issue. Robert Bloch took time off from his very busy schedule to write a special Guest Editorial (a regular column in Thriller) on the forgotten fantasies of the silent era. Mr. Bloch has just finished a novel, WIND MUSIC, and he's engaged in writing the screenplay to AMERICAN PSYCHO to be released later this year. My thanks go to Mr. Dale Wingura, a professional film critic from way back who can look at films like noone else can and who gives the most brilliant and careful observations towards a film that I've ever read. Dale is one of the very few critics who can look at Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY with the proper thoughts in his head, and that is why I asked him to do the review special for Thriller. Dale's also written some expert reviews for us and he's going to be writing a regular column in Thriller, Spooking of columns others will be Greg Bazar's fan page(s), the Guest Editorial, Jack Nunk's unique piece on Radio Horror Stories, and the new sections written by Thriller's foreign correspondents. Bounding of the issue is the Editorial, Film review columns, and the superb artwork done by the dedicated Bill Nelson and Jim Garrison. Bill & Jim have been of great help to ye editor and if weren't for their help this zine would not have been possible. I am indebted to them both.

In upcoming issues we have articles such as JAMES BOND On the Screen, The Film of Roger Corman, Star Trek, Jay Bost's The Media Industry (a magnificent checklist of Lagoon's film in 1971, and lots more.

The absence of photographs in this issue is due to the fact that stills cost extra money, and Thriller loses more than \$250. We are steadily increasing our financial capital, and the second issue will be loaded with stills. You are pressed many stills in our ads, and you'll get them nexttime, I promise. After all, what's a magazine without pictures?

Thriller is going to be printed semi-annually, with the #2 issue coming out in December. The price is \$1 for one issue and \$6 for a two year (four issues) subscription. We will continue with the offset printing and the paper will be increased to 45. Write us a letter, if you will, and we'll see you again in December.

Jerry Weddle
Jerry Weddle
Editor, Thriller



FANDOM UNLIMITED ENTERPRISES is a new fanzine-publishing organization devoted to the serious collection, discussion, and evaluation of comic books, science fiction, films, old radio, pulp, and other fanzine subjects. F.U.E.'s first publication, FANDOM UNLIMITED Number One deals primarily with comic books and science fiction. It is forty pages long, photo offset (lithograph) printed, mailed attached (wraparound) binding. Single copy price is \$1.00.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTARY BY THE EDITOR

Robert Bloch
Frederic Wertheim, M.D.

REVIEWS BY TERRY MANN

Death of the super-hero
a review of SAVAGE TALKED
Mike Friedrich
A history of Comic Books
Ray Bradbury
Duffy's Tavern
ED Review
Crazy Ace & War Comics
Feminism & Synthesis of the
Arts
The Sex Warrior Woman, etc.
plus fiction and poetry
and an art show.



ARTISTS' ART

Alan Stanley
Jim Gerwick
Mario Navarro
Bill Rotaler
D. Bruce Perry
Chun Wei Fong
George Proctor
Steven Wiley
Cora Sherman
Steve Fabian (and others)

BOOK REVIEWS BY

Gordon Matthews
Clay Solino
Randall D. Larson
Rick Carroll
Shel Dorf
Gene Reley
Duffy Wohlend
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Hank Rosenfeld
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